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# Sewanee Review

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October-December, 1932

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# Sewanee Review

Vol. XL.

No. 4

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"Cotton Blossom" ..... Hamilton Basso PAGE  
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*In this vivid account of a performance on a Mississippi showboat, Mr. Basso presents a symbolic criticism of the South of today. "The old life of the South, the calm, good, indulgent life, is gone. It has lost its force, and has been robbed of its meaning. It exists only in the past, something to be remembered, something we of the South wish could be restored. But restoration is impossible. There has been a tearing away of an arm, only it has been more than an arm that has been torn away. And what has come to take its place, this unsettled, industrial new South, disordered and feverish, is not picturesque. It is anything but picturesque." This declaration by a distinguished writer of New Orleans, whose biography of Beauregard is shortly to be published, is a telling rejoinder to the challenge of the Nashville group's I'll Take My Stand.*

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Comprehensible criticism of "modernistic" literary devices is impossible, as Mr. Max Eastman's recent *The Cult of Unintelligibility* so decisively demonstrated, because of the esoteric, if not outré, theories of the leaders of "the literary left." This issue of L'EXIL, therefore, is gratefully dedicated to the Sitwells, T. S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, e. e. cummings, James Joyce and their imitators, too numerous to cite by name. It is earnestly believed that L'EXIL will provide the most revealing and doubtless most comprehensible introduction to the "literary front".

Though the editor of the SEWANEE REVIEW designed and executed the sur-realist linoleum cut on the title page (which depicts in abstractionist style an elusive idea otherwise impossible to depict graphically without evoking more—or less!—of what Mr. Lambert has in mind) still, the onlie begetter of L'EXIL is a graduate student in English Literature in the University of the South and is also a student in the Theological School. In his cavalier jeu d'esprit, he has happily hit off what must be the inevitable nightmare effect of credulous and unrelieved addiction to such vehicles of "the new sensibility" as transition, Pagany, Blues, the Criterion, Hound & Horn, Front, and Left.

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- Mr. Edison's Phonograph: a Post-Mortem . . . . . R. D. Darrell  
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*by Hamilton Basso*

## "COTTON BLOSSOM"

THE SOUTH FROM A MISSISSIPPI SHOWBOAT

THERE was a show-boat up the river, some thirty miles away, and we decided to go to it. We left the city at seven o'clock. In a few minutes we were in the country. It was winter and night had fallen. Darkness was everywhere and a high wind blew.

We began to talk about the old days on the river. It was once very splendid and colorful. The high sound of its name meant much more than it means now. Steamers raced each other, future great men floated down on rafts, the levees teemed with activity, the towns bustled and prospered. The Mississippi was a source of life to this part of the South and life revolved about it. It was a pleasant and slightly remote life, with strict punctualities of morality and behavior, and those who lived it conducted themselves as though they were taking part in a play or dance. There was a movement to it, gracious and calm, and there was a fine feeling for form and tradition. It was a significant civilization, destined for only a brief life, based on false concepts of economic and sectional superiority . . . but in the show-boat up the river we expected to see a certain aspect of it restored.

We had been over the road many times before, but always in daylight. It runs from New Orleans to the North, along the river, past oil refineries and factories, past sugar plantations and truck farms, past little villages where the houses are all dusty and falling down. There is a certain terror attached to it, if one is able to feel the terror, a projection through disintegration with the facts of disintegration on either side . . . the refineries, the factories, the dismal villages, the terrible poverty that gnaws at the people like a giant maggot. But now there was only the darkness, with the wind whistling through it, and sometimes the sound of a bough cracking and falling into the road.

Lights bloomed ahead of us and we drove into a town. It was located where the show-boat was, tied up against the levee. We parked the car in a lot adjoining a deserted "Seaman's Home", which once had been a bar, and climbed upon the levee. We

climbed into a cold, dense fog. It hung over the levee like smoke, rising from the river like the smoke of many smouldering fires. It enveloped the show-boat, called the "Cotton Blossom", so that we could only see its outlines.

"Is that it?" Ethna asked.

"It must be," I said.

We said nothing about being disappointed. We were both ashamed of the wild imaginings. Ashamed because, knowing it had all died, knowing how utterly dead it was, we thought it might live again. This was what we should have expected. A dingy, ramshackle little boat, not as large as a river ferry, sagging disconsolately into the fog. Through the mist there gleamed a single stream of yellow and purple lights, strung along the rail, making a dim attempt at gaudiness.

We crossed the gang-plank and walked upon the deck. A few negroes stood about, leaning on the rail in the easy way they have, and a farmer's boy, with a patched rump, was bending over to look at the curls of little Eva; falling, I supposed, in love with her. I went to the ticket window where a blond woman asked me how many tickets I wanted. I said two. They were seventy-five cents each. I took my change and tickets and we went inside.

It was full of people and noise and smells. There was not a breath of air. All the windows were closed, nailed fast. Even the cracks, which might have given some ventilation, were sealed with adhesive plaster. After the clean winter night it was sickeningly hot, not-clean bodies crowding each other, and the thick smell of old perspiration.

Into the small theatre, arranged in the traditional fashion with orchestra and balcony and boxes on either side, more than five hundred people had been crowded. They were noisy and loud, talking and shouting, excited because they had come to the show. They had come from all over the country-side, Latins mostly, with the light hair and fair skin of an occasional German or Swede standing out sharply. They were quite foreign and old-world, with un-Americanized faces and voices, shreds of the old countries clinging to their clothes and gestures like burrs.

In the boxes, that looked like green-papered sedan-chairs, were the blades of the town. They leaned back in their chairs, dressed in hard, exaggerated city clothes, with loud shirts and ties. They simpered, brushing back their hair, winking and leering at the

girls. It was easy to understand they thought the show-boat beneath them. When they wanted to be really entertained they went to the city. They had just come to have a good time, displaying themselves and flirting with the girls.

We were given places in the midst of a large family, ten in all, who occupied every seat in the row but two. We sat down amongst them, trying to get rid of the feeling of intrusion, becoming, in our humble way, a part of the family. The mother sat next to me, a vast, genial Italian woman with mountainous breasts and flabby arms. Beside her was the father, short and stocky, with a set, defiant look on his face, the look of the peasant. The peasant, frustrated by life, is yet defiant of it. His soul is bare and plain, there is a certain stony barrenness to his soul, yet he can be fiercely proud. He is so completely what he is, and so stubborn, and yet so deadly set against the disgrace and humiliation of it. The father was so set, braced against life, looking steadily before him with his knees apart, crouched in his own stubbornness.

Next to the father were the three sons. They were grown men, their faces tanned by the sun, bulges of muscles beneath their sleeves. They stared at Ethna, watching her arrange her hair, looked at her with dark, shy eyes . . . quickly drawing them away when she returned their glance. Near Ethna was the eldest daughter. She was about eighteen. She had come with her lover and wore her best dress. There were many crimson ruffles and a fluff of gauze about her neck. The daughter and her lover sat close together, their shoulders pressing, holding hands. Sometimes he rubbed his forehead against her cheek. They made no effort at concealment. What they were doing, lovers making love, was a human and natural thing to do. There were many such lovers, sitting close together and holding hands, nobody paying any attention to them. Not even when they kissed.

The lights began to dim and three musicians appeared from behind the stage. There was a cornet, a violin, and a Spanish guitar. The musicians were old and nondescript. In their age, the characterless grayness that was over them like dust, they seemed like brothers. The audience greeted their appearance with loud applause. It was beginning to get impatient. It wanted the play to begin.

The musicians went into the orchestral pit and began to play. It was a sour, sentimental tune, with much whimpering of the



violin and many wrong notes, so that it was difficult to make out what they were playing. It seemed to be, however, *Hearts and Flowers*. They finished, with the cornet blaring out, and a great hush came over the audience. There was the noise of bodies relaxing, seeking more comfortable positions, and then silence. The curtain went up and the play began.

The name of the play was *Lena Rivers*. I had never seen it before, or even heard of it, but later I learned that a novel of that name, from which the play was adapted, created a sensation in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It was supposed to have been very frank and outspoken and many people were shocked by it.

The curtain rose on the interior of a mountain cabin. It might have been in Kentucky or North Carolina or Tennessee. The exact location was never made clear. Even the players seemed to have no definite idea about it. It was sometimes called "our old Kentucky home" and sometimes "our little cabin here in Tennessee." Just where it was did not seem to matter very much.

The set was intended to be very elaborate. There were coonskins on the walls, an old musket hung over the fire-place, a red cloth covered the rude table. At the rise of the curtain a grandmother was discovered on the stage. She wore a black dress and her shoulders were covered with a shawl. She immediately began a recital of all her woes, in a high falsetto voice, and I had to smile. It was so rankly amateurish. The bad music, the impossible set, the grandmother with the painted wrinkles on her face like deep blue scars.

Then Lena came upon the stage. She was a mature woman, thirty at least, wearing a little gingham dress that failed to cover her knees. Her hair was short and twisted into small tight curls that fell upon her forehead like a crown of acorns. She talked in a high, piping voice, lisping when she remembered to, and walked with little mincing steps. Every gesture she made was raw and exaggerated. If she wanted to sigh she drew in a great breath and exhaled it all at once. And when she pointed, which she did very often, she flourished her finger like a sword.

I resented her, despising her for her faking and vulgarity, and wondered if they would take her seriously. Then, looking at the audience, I saw how desperately seriously she was being taken. It had completely surrendered itself to her, body and soul. She

walked upon the stage, insulting childhood, insulting womanhood, dragging them both down to a rotten level of cheap sentimentality, and they loved her. She was the heroine. That was enough. Nothing further was needed to enlist their sympathies. She was the heroine and they loved her.

There was to be sensed, too, a strange, religious attitude on the part of the spectators. The grandmother, wiping her eyes in a corner of her shawl, heavy-laden with grief, said that life was hard but God was good. An electric current of assent passed over the audience. A woman crossed herself and whispered amen. More amens followed. They were moved, for a few moments, by a sweep of religious ecstasy. The grandmother was no longer a character in a play. She was a priestess, an oracle, a holy vessel into which God had poured the crystal chrism of His word. God, indeed, was good. Life may be hard but He is good. He is always good.

It was like that all during the play. A character would utter a meaningless platitude, the empty, mousy words that dull people like to hear, and then the whispered amens came out of the darkness. There was a feeling that men and women were reaching out as they reached out in church, raising their arms from some dreary emptiness, blindly seeking something to bolster their faith and courage.

Off-stage there was a voice. It called "Lee-nee, Lee-nee," with the name's final syllable trailing off into a forced high sound. A faint murmur, like insect noise, rose from the audience. It stirred, expectantly, pleasurable. There was to be a comedian. Such a voice could only belong to a comedian. They would be able to laugh.

He came through the door of the cabin. He wore a red wig and had covered his front teeth with tar to pretend they were missing. His head bobbed loosely up and down as though a paralytic affliction had attacked the muscles of his neck. When he spoke it was in a senseless, half-witted fashion, like an idiot, with an idiot's twitching hands.

The audience thought he was marvellous. They welcomed him as they had welcomed Lena. He was the comedian. They were supposed to laugh at him. They would do so. He was the very soul, his face the very mask, of comedy. They roared at everything he said, no matter what it was, at every clownish antic. What

if he did seem an idiot, if laughing at him was like laughing at an idiot? There had been idiots before. There was one in the family of the mother who sat next to me. She told me all about him during the intermission. The comedian, whose name was Sparky, reminded her of him. He was her cousin John. He scratched his face and beat his head upon the door. He was pitiful, very pitiful, but sometimes he was very funny. One moment he was a hen, sitting and clucking on her nest; the next he was a cow having a calf, mooing and kicking his legs. It was unfortunate, it was like a curse of the good God, but Cousin John was sometimes very funny. So funny that she could not help but laugh at him. She really had to laugh at him sometimes, she could not help herself. And so Sparky the comedian was very real to her, and real to the rest of them. He was somebody they knew, a character taken from the life about them. They were pleased with him, and laughed and applauded, and loved him as they loved Lena.

The play went on. Sparky reached into the bosom of his shirt and brought out a postcard. He tells Lena it is from her Uncle John, her rich Uncle John who lives in the city. The post-master read it and told him. Uncle John is coming to see them. He will arrive Tuesday. That is today. He should come at any moment. The train has already arrived. He is coming up the mountain path.

That was his cue to enter. He stomped into the cabin like a bull. The boards shook and the musket rattled over the fire-place. He was made up to represent a man of money, a financier. He wore a winged collar and carried a cane. In his hand he clutched a gray fedora. The show-boat, one gathered, was too poor to afford the traditional high silk hat. Or else it had been bashed during some previous performance.

The audience recoiled from him, shrinking away. There was something unreasonable, something too vicious, in the way he was despised. The daughter near Ethna called him a bad man. The dark eyes of the son flashed hate, the male instinct rising in them. They would protect the distressed maiden, do battle for her, right her wrongs, love her. They are strong, she is weak. Let her put her sweet head on their breasts, let them hold her in their arms, let them love the lovely heroine.

In the darkness a man muttered. A hiss sounded. Another.

Then there were many hisses, filling the theatre, so that the actors had to wait before they could speak their lines.

Ethna, later on, spoke of this as a manifestation of peasant simplicity. It was just that, peasant simplicity, with ignorance perhaps the better, though harsher, word to use. But for a few moments, thinking of their fierce determination to respond, there seemed to be something else. Something that went much deeper. If they accepted things so much more readily than we, if they were willing to recognize truths on the simple basis of their truthfulness . . . the truths of virtue and villainy, for instance . . . was it not equally profound as simple? They became strangely Oriental, like an audience of Chinese, making scenery useless and the actors mere shells to contain ideas. Each was a mask, a symbol, beneath which vibrated the all-important idea, the truth, the cause for action. And it was upon these ideas that the interest of the audience was centered, so that the play became, not a conflict of characters or emotions, but a clashing of ideas, of great, basic forces. And there they were one with the old Greeks.

But all that is false and untrue. I would like to believe that it was true but it is not. It is giving them a character not truly theirs. It is making them picturesque, falling into the habit of picturesqueness. It is an easy habit to fall into. And it has become pernicious in so many of the people who have written about the South. There was nothing Oriental or Grecian about the audience in the show-boat. There were subtle nuances of feeling, no high emotions. If they so warmly embraced Lena and so bitterly hated her uncle, if a few coon-skins and a musket made a mountain cabin, the reason was that they were simple and ignorant and could see only what was put before them.

That ignorance, in a greater or lesser measure, is over vast sections of the South. And it is difficult to reconcile this ignorance with the idea of a picturesque South. The South is not picturesque any more than poverty and ignorance, and the spiritual deadening that seems to come from poverty and ignorance, are picturesque. It is raw and stirring, changing faster than we can imagine, its heart-beat more and more becoming attuned to the universal beat, the throbbing of the machine. The old life of the South, the calm, good, indolent life is gone. It has lost its force and has been robbed of its meaning. It exists only in the past, something to be remembered, something we of the South wish could be restored.



But restoration is impossible. There has been a tearing away, like the tearing away of an arm, only it has been more than an arm that has been torn away. And what has come to take its place, this unsettled, industrial new South, disordered and feverish, is not picturesque. It is anything but picturesque.

The end of the first act found the audience in tears. The villain had come, his foul work was accomplished, Lena and her grandmother had been uprooted from their old home. The grandmother left with Uncle John. Lena lingered, helpless and alone. She came to the footlights and spoke farewell. Farewell to this my childhood home, farewell to these my childhood scenes. She dabbed her eyes with a corner of her poor shawl, dramatically pecking at tears that were not there. Then she left, while the soft music began and the curtain fell.

During the intermission, while I was talking with the mother beside me, there was vaudeville. It was very unexpected and strange. The orchestra struck up a jazz tune, there was a loud whoop from the back of the stage, and then—of all things—Lena and the villainous uncle came dancing out with their arms about each other.

The audience was quite obviously shocked. Lena, who had been reduced to helpless weeping because of the evil doings of this very uncle, now dancing with him—How could she do such a thing! But this was a theatre and in a theatre strange things may happen. So, although still suspicious that what they could so plainly see was not quite true, they settled themselves for whatever was to happen.

First there was a dance, a jig rather, with the heavy figure of the uncle thumping up and down. Lena thumped along with him, more lightly, clicking her heels. She still wore the dress of the first act, the garb of the simple mountain lass, and in the midst of her leapings there were constant flashings of incongruous pink pants. The audience, unmoved by the gymnastics of their legs, unmoved by the pink flashings (although the boys in the box leaned forward to see better) paid them but perfunctory attention. When they had finished there was but a scattering of light applause.

The youths in the box became noisy. All during the act they had been drinking and now the cheap liquor had gone to their heads. One of them began to mimic the violinist. He put his



shoulder on his chin and scraped an imaginary bow across his arm. Another, not to be outdone, stuck his foot over the side of the box and, pulling up his trouser-leg, waved his foot in time with the music. The others clapped their hands and stamped their feet, also keeping time with the music.

In the back of the theatre, sitting quietly, was another group of young men. They were farmers. They had come in a band, walking together, like students or soldiers from the barracks. They wore old clothes, with patches in their coats, their shoes white with dust, soles caked with mud. They sat close together, with their arms on each other's shoulders, something like the lovers. They seemed to form an entity of opposition to the youths in the box. They were of the earth, enslaved by the earth. The young men in the box belonged to the machine. And so it became the conflict of two kinds of enslavement, with the farmers somehow masculine and vital and the others insulted and dragged down. For, while the soil breathes something into a man, no matter how hard the work, the machine only takes out. It gives back nothing. It squeezes him dry, as the juice is squeezed from a lemon, and nothing is returned to take its place. The machine, as we have it today, insults a man and drags him down. It drags him down to its own level, the level of the machine. In time, if men do not take hold of it, and discard the particular kind of civilization they have created by misusing the machine, it may destroy us all; leaving only empty shells to perform, in grim mockery, the functions of men. Perhaps the pessimists are right. Perhaps that is the direction in which we are going. Perhaps there is none of us wise and able enough to assert our mastery over the machine. It is not possible to know.

The vaudeville finished and the play began again. It continued for hours, with many complications and many dramatic situations. The audience sat quietly, paying strict attention, and the play went on and on. Children whimpered and fell asleep. Midnight struck in a church along the river road. The gentle sound of the bells rolled across the water and came, even more gentle, into the show-boat. And still the play went on . . .

Suddenly, as if the dramatist had tired of it, or had run out of devices, it ended. Lena found her father, the stain of illegitimacy was taken from her name, the machinations of her uncle frustrated. The curtain fell with the mountain girl in the arms of her lover.

Another Cinderella was triumphant and the tired audience was triumphant and happy with her.

There was no applause. They rose from their seats and began to leave. The Italian mother picked up her youngest. He was asleep. His little dark head was lost in the vastness of her bosom. There was a crush about the doors. Men and women and children were packed together. Through the crush, a slow-moving weariness, ran noise, the laughter and shouting of the youths who were in the box. They pushed their way with arms and shoulders, jostling the girls and trying to feel their breasts.

The farmers left together, in their little band. There was one, dark and handsome, who was obviously the leader. It was easy to see the others adored him. He was arrogant and contemptuous, arrogance in the way he carried his head, contempt in the glances he shot in the noisy direction of the drunken boys.

The owner of the show-boat stood just inside the door, at the bottom of the stairs that led to the balcony. He was a little man, huddled in a grayish suit, always pulling at his black bow tie. He told me the "Cotton Blossom" had been on the river for more than forty years. It travelled, he said, as far north as Cairo and as far south as the little river towns below New Orleans. The show-boat business was just like any other business. There were good times and bad times. Of late the times had been bad. Very bad.

But it was more than a business to him. He had a kind of love for his ramshackle boat that had been going up and down the river for forty years. And he had one great cause for pride. He believed his boat had been the fountain-head of inspiration for a woman novelist who wrote a book about the show-boat as it was in the old days.

"She put it on pretty thick," he said.

The actors? They came from everywhere and anywhere. Just where he didn't know—New York, Wisconsin, Mississippi—from all over the United States. Just why they were show-boat people there was no way of telling. They liked it, he supposed, liked drifting down the muddy river and playing one-night stands. It was a lazy life, not very tiring, and then they knew they were going to get three meals a day and a place to sleep. That was better than hanging around a booking office, day after day. A few very successful actors and actresses, he said, got their start on the "Cotton Blossom". There was one, a woman, who made a great

name for herself on Broadway. He told me her name but it was unfamiliar to me and now I have forgotten it. Anyway, I am sure it was just a fairy tale.

We told him good-night and went upon the deck. We stood on the deck and watched the people leave. In a little while they had all gone. The lights went out and we were left in the darkness and the fog. We could hear the ropes straining and the river sucking at the bottom of the boat. We crossed the gang-plank and walked into the fog. It was thick and wet and cold. We could feel people about us, sometimes we could hear their voices, but we could not see them. The fog had covered everything.

*by Arthur Tresidder*

## STORM

Over on the hill the crest has vanished;  
 Lightning streaks point out the colossal erasure.  
 Nothing sublime shows the tumult-hidden edge of my brain . . .  
 I am the poplar leaf, turning belly-up before the storm,  
 Afraid, except for a trembling moment, of thought.  
 I am the fly, damp-winged and listless,  
 Confused, beaten down by the storm's presence.  
 I am the eaves-gutter, weeping futilely  
 After the storm passes.  
 I am the hour of sunshine following the storm,  
 Cloudy, faltering, tear-marked.

*by Moultrie Guerry*

## MAKERS OF SEWANEE

### I. JAMES HERVEY OTEY

"**C**HEROKEE" he was dubbed by the students of the University of North Carolina when he entered Chapel Hill a boy of sixteen; six feet four, raw-boned, powerful, tanned, with dark hair and eyes, for all world like a young Indian chief. He bore the marks of outdoor life on his father's farm in Bedford County, Virginia, under the Peaks of Otter, and there flowed, in his veins the blood of strong men. His grandfather raised a company at his own expense and led it himself, much to the discomfiture of the British. His father was of stern stuff and passed it on to his son. One morning James complained of a pain in his chest having kept him awake all night. His tender-hearted mother was much concerned; but his father ordered him to the blacksmith shop, there to hammer away for three weeks! His pain was cured.

The Oteys were not members of any church, although they came of a fine old Church of England family. This was not surprising, for religion was at the lowest ebb in the first of the last century that it has ever been in America and probably in England, and the Episcopal Church, being the daughter of the Church of England, was looked upon with suspicion for a time after the Revolutionary War. But there must have been some fear of Jehovah in the Otey circle; for one day when James was a young boy, he was trying to get a hen and her chickens in out of a thunder storm. The hen kept passing back and forth under a fence as fast as James jumped back and forth over it. Dripping with rain and trembling with rage, the boy hurled a stick at the fowl and cried: "Consarn you!"

Just as I uttered these words, I was dazed by a blinding flash of lightning, accompanied by a crashing volley of heaven's artillery. I left the hen and chickens to their fate, and fled in terror to the house and crept under the bed . . . , endeavoring to shut out the sound of what seemed to me the terrible voice of God, rebuking me for my profanity.

James Oety attended school in New London, Virginia, the scene of Patrick Henry's fiery oratory, and probably caught some of his spirit.

At Chapel Hill, while others were trying to be letter perfect for the highest honors, Oety did good work but took time to revel in wide ranges of literature. He also cultivated valuable and permanent friends among faculty and students. Among the former was Professor Mitchell, who died surveying Mt. Mitchell, N. C., and among the latter was William Mercer Green, afterwards fourth Chancellor of the UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH and first Bishop of Mississippi.

Oety was also a violinist. He tells the story on himself that on an episcopal visit, he was interrupted in his playing by a darky servant who looked in at his door and said: "Massa, better put up dat fiddle; dere's a preacher in de house". At any rate, such was his culture and attainments that the University of North Carolina bestowed upon him at graduation the degree of *Bachelor of Belles Lettres*, a distinction hitherto unknown in that institution. It is interesting to note that not many years later, Columbia University, New York, conferred an honorary degree upon him, as it did upon a number of men whose names are connected with the founding of Sewanee. For a year after graduation, Oety was tutor at Chapel Hill in Greek and Latin, and continued his studies.

It has been suggested that Oety was not experienced in matters religious. Great was his dilemma when there devolved upon him the duty of holding chapel services at the University! (Just after daylight!). Fortunately a friend came to his rescue and suggested the Book of Common Prayer. "What is that?" asked Oety. Although a Prayer Book had long been an heirloom in his mother's possession, he had never seen it. His friend replied that there was probably a copy in his trunk which, with the Bible, his mother always packed among his things. With that happy occurrence may be dated Oety's "first serious interest in religious matters and consequent attachment to the forms of the Church."

In later years, Bishop Oety was proud to call himself a "Prayer Book Churchman". And he followed its injunctions to the letter. When a bride insisted that she would not say "obey", the Bishop replied that he had no right to change the Prayer Book. After some discussion, she reluctantly agreed to make the proper vow, and the ceremony began. Regaining her boldness at the altar,



she refused to repeat the word "obey" after the Bishop. "Obey", said Bishop Otey sternly. No sound. He turned to leave the chancel. The bride gave in. "Obey", she said quickly,—*"if I can"*. The amendment was overlooked and the wedding completed.

Joining the pioneers moving westward from North Carolina, Otey with his bride settled in Franklin, Maury County, Tennessee, and opened a school for boys. Undoubtedly he was impressed by the need not only for "reading, writing and arithmetic" but for good sound religious and moral training. At all events, when he accepted an invitation to be head of the academy in Warrenton, N. C., he was prepared by his friend, now Rev. William M. Green, for baptism, confirmation, and eventually the ministry, being ordained by Bishop Ravenscroft, whom he admired above all men; and returning to Franklin, he re-opened his school and held services in the Masonic lodge. He also went back and forth the eighteen miles to Nashville where in a Masonic hall he gathered another congregation, which soon became a parish under the name of Christ Church. In the same way he founded St. Peter's Church, Columbia.

This man of God was just the kind to cope with the hardy pioneer. One night he was rudely awakened in a hotel by a gambler who was evidently accustomed to having his way. "Get up out of here, Stranger", he demanded. "Get out this moment or I will pitch you out of the window". Otey stretched out an arm and said: "Before you throw me out of the window, feel *that*." He was left alone to continue his slumbers.

The Prayer Book service with its responses was so strange to the backwoodsmen that they used to say, "Let us go hear that man preach and his wife jaw back at him". But even out of those crude beginnings came such men from among Otey's pupils as Matthew F. Maury, who, in his day, was world-renowned as the scientist who discovered and plotted the Gulf Stream and other ocean currents. He was one of those who delivered addresses at the laying of the corner-stone at Sewanee in 1860.

When Mr. Otey came to Tennessee as a minister, there was not an Episcopal congregation in the State. In 1829 he brought Bishop Ravenscroft to visit his congregations, at which time the Diocese of Tennessee was organized in Nashville, July 1, with Otey and two others as the only presbyters. In 1833 Mr. Otey was elected

Bishop and was consecrated by Bishop White in Philadelphia the following year. In six years, he increased the number of clergy in Tennessee from six to twenty-one, and during his episcopacy he confirmed more than six thousand persons.

Through Bishop Ravenscroft he fell heir to the best Catholic tradition. The Oxford movement seemed to combine in Otey with the Evangelical. He was as vigorous in his expositions of the Church and its apostolic ministry and sacraments as in his preaching of the Gospel. Dignity of office and simplicity of ceremony united in him.

It was said of Otey that "in strength of mind, vigor of intellect, and reach and grasp of thought" he had no superior in the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church; and that as a preacher he was among the greatest of his day—clear and forceful, without mannerisms or self-consciousness, a proclaimer of the simple Gospel and a profound teacher. This is an amazing fact in view of the limitations his strenuous life placed upon his literary opportunities. His brief, almost impromptu, words before Prince Albert and again before the Lord Mayor of London serve as short examples of his gracious and thoughtful eloquence after the manner of his day.

He compelled attention in "State Legislature or a Council of Indians; in an English Cathedral, or before a congregation of Negroes". In a sermon, once, he was describing so vividly how a wayward youth was *going* to destruction that suddenly a young man in the congregation involuntarily cried out, "My God! He's *gone*."

His sermons were often long, but never tedious, as they were packed with progressive reasoning and instruction, as well as with passages of inspiring appeal. But one day when an organist, an excitable Englishman, ran his prelude over the hour for beginning the service, the Bishop, always prompt, stepped into the chancel and ordered the organist to stop. The organist jumped up and, pointing a long finger at the Bishop, cried: "Bishop, when you are preaching one of your long sermons, I never tell you to stop"; and with that he went on doggedly to the end of his performance, while Bishop Otey waited, his sternness gradually melting.

This first Bishop of Tennessee was not only active and eloquent; he was far-sighted for his thirty-three years.

The passion of his life came more than ever to the front—*edu-*

*cation united to Christian principles.* What he was doing in Franklin, he wished to do in the State and even beyond. In the diocesan convention of 1832 his resolution was adopted proposing a school of classical and theological learning; and his first addresses to convention as Bishop pressed the plan. Indeed, a vast amount of his preaching and endeavor was directed to education and particularly to a university which should help to save the South from ignorance and extremes of religious fanaticism and indifference. His sermon before the General Convention of the whole Church in Richmond, 1859, sets forth many of his ideas pertaining to "Christian Education". One of his sentences from that sermon is a fair example:

Knowledge has never preceded virtue; and it has never survived it.

Another example from his address on Lookout Mountain:

Now, our statesmen, from Washington downward, have unanimously agreed that *intelligence* and *virtue* among the people, are the chief supports of our civil institutions; that upon these two pillars, 'strength' and 'beauty', rests the political and social edifice of our country.

Rev. Leonidas Polk, who came to Tennessee in 1834, was Bishop Otey's right hand man in his projects. He helped the Bishop establish in 1836 an Institute for girls at Columbia; and he served as chairman of a committee to raise funds for a university. Plans went so far that Madison County, which was generous to the undertaking, was chosen for the site of an institution to be called "Madison College". Unfortunately the financial panic of 1837 destroyed these first bright dreams of what is now Sewanee. But Bishop Otey never gave up his great purpose, and was foremost in responding to Bishop Polk's call to the whole Southern Church to establish a university on a grander scale.

It is hard for us to realize the extent and strenuous nature of Bishop Otey's work. When Polk became Bishop of the Southwest in 1838, Otey found it necessary for a time, in addition to his diocesan administrations, to fill his place as Rector of St. Peter's and Principal of the Female Institute. That is not all. In 1841 the General Convention assigned him the missionary districts of Arkansas and the Indian Territory; and about the same time

the Dioceses of Mississippi and Florida elected him their provisional Bishop. One series of visits would take him a journey of three or four thousand miles. And yet he visited his congregations in Tennessee on an average of twice a year! This is the more remarkable when one considers that he had to travel on horseback, through storms, over mountains, in trackless swamps, in the lonely wilderness, among Indians and degraded whites, administering to Negroes as well; exposed to filth and disease. He preached and *taught* not only in churches (often not his own) but, he says, from house to house. From Florida to Missouri! The extracts below are revealing:

Reach Rock Row, 9 p.m., wet; find several great rowdies at the hotel. Retire to bed; great fat Indian comes and tumbles in beside me.

Went to bed, but immediately attacked by bugs. Got up and went out into the stage-coach, and staid till morning.

Slept in T's house (an Indian) last night—the hardest floor I ever felt.

A letter from his daughter:

These labors told severely on his health. After riding all day, his stopping place was often only a little tavern, which he would reach cold, wet, and hungry, and compelled to sit down to coarse unwholesome food, which the stomach revolted at . . . In his earlier diaries, I find such extracts as these: "Weather cold and windy . . . Reach Bolivar a little after sundown; stop at tavern, so weary I cannot dismount without assistance. After sleepless and uncomfortable night, head aching badly, eyes sore, and every bone and muscle giving pain"; but must press on and have service that day. Often his only comment was, "Weary! Weary! Weary!"

His friends, seeing him breaking under the strain of mental and physical labor and frequent attacks of illness, sent him abroad in 1851 for a year. Absent from his Diocesan Convention for the first time he wrote to the members of his gratitude for their fellowship, which had meant so much to him, quoting that verse of the One Hundred and Thirty-Third Psalm which became the motto of the University: "Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in Unity"—*Ecce, Quam Bonum*.

So it was that Sewanee's first Founder saw England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Switzerland, Belgium, and Prussia and their great



universities, and established some of those strong ties with friends in England and Europe and with their cultural institutions which have always been enjoyed at Sewanee.

On July 4, 1857, at Lookout Mountain, Chattanooga, Bishop Otey was elected chairman of the first convention of trustees called together to found a university for the South; and, as he had fathered the whole idea, he was called upon to make the principal address on the nature of the undertaking. His words are found in the first "Proceedings of the Trustees", with a glowing narrative of the occasion by Bishop Gregg. To the suggestion that such a university implied sectionalism, Bishop Otey replies vigorously, and declares:

We affirm that our aim is eminently national and patriotic, and should commend itself to every lover of his country . . . We contemplate no strife, save a generous rivalry with our brethren, as to who shall furnish to this great Republic the truest men, the truest Christians, and the truest patriots.

"Thus far", writes Bishop Gregg, "The flag hung idly from its staff; but when the Bishop began to speak of our country and the love all good men bear it, a breeze came to stir the stars and stripes", and they seemed to be "seeking the person of the speaker and causing his words to come as it were from the midst of its folds". This flag and its staff, made by special order of President Fillmore and carried to the World's Fair in London, 1851, by Commissioner Duncan, whose nephew took it to Lookout Mountain, now hangs in All Saints' Chapel as a memento of the Founding of the University and of Otey's patriotism.

Bishop Otey was very much in earnest in his patriotic claim as is indicated by his efforts to forestall the Civil War by such letters as he wrote to the Secretary of State Seward, and by pastorals and prayers for peace, believing that if the question of union or disunion were left to the majority of the people in South Carolina and the Southern states, they would vote for union. "They will be ready to fight—so am I—but under and for the Constitution". In the end he felt the Southern cause to be just,— "under the Constitution".

But the war was a great blow to him. In the midst of it, his wife died, 1861. She had endured her share of hardships. When they had moved to Franklin, he says, his only possessions were his



wife, his horse and buggy, and his fiddle. At times, even as Bishop, his salary for the year was less than five hundred dollars. Bishop Otey's compassionate and sympathetic nature can be seen in his letters of consolation that are scarcely beyond compare in number and depth of feeling. This was due perhaps to the love which bound him to each member of his family and made the loss of three children and now of his wife poignant indeed. He was at this time, moreover, constantly ill, yet found occasion to render services to his people in the stress of war, to visit Polk's army in Kentucky, to nurse back to life a sick son, and to obtain modification and suspension of harsh orders during Sherman's occupation of Memphis. General Sherman held him in great respect and allowed him full liberties in the city.

Bishop Otey, now sixty-three years old, could endure no longer. He died April 23, 1863, and was buried beside his wife and children in the soil of Maury County, in the shadow of St. John's Church, Ashwood.

What has this man done to make Sewanee?

Materially, his only act was to preside at the laying of her first corner-stone, October 10, 1860. But he gave to her her first impulse; he set forth cogently her ideal of education which he exemplified in himself; he inspired her with his *pioneering* spirit, he who was the first pioneer missionary bishop in his Church in the South; and he was the first to contribute to that "Sewanee Churchmanship" which has been noted for its loyalty to the Church in all essentials, believing in the dignity and sacredness of her nature, truly liberal and thoroughly non-partisan. "I cannot and will not", said Bishop Otey, "adopt the shibboleths of any party. I am Christ's *Freedman*". The following words, indicative of the Churchman and Evangelist, were placed at Bishop Otey's request upon his monument:

*First Bishop of the Holy Catholic Church in Tennessee.*

*"The Blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin."*

*by Alton Deas*

### COURTYARD WITH EXOTICS

It was a haw apple fell, Désirée,  
Or a pomegranate, such fruits as ripen here,  
Fell to the fountain edge, and tumbled in,  
No more than that—yet you are cold?

A fruit, no doubt. But would you have me gay  
When unseen things descend too near?  
A face looked over the parapet. A grin  
Was somehow obvious. The night turns old

Too stark to cope with; and, I think a knife  
With sparkling jewelled hilt had clattered less  
Upon ferns and oleander petals,  
If dropped unwarily in the smooth stillness.

Fluttering moths against a white moonflower,  
Fluttering white hands! Ah, you draw away,  
And your red lips forget to kiss; you cower—  
Come, then, out of the garden, Désirée!

### THE EMPTY STAGE

They add—you deprecate it—broken-hearted!  
Here is the stage setting. A balcony  
Hangs from the coral wall; on either side  
A tall, and dimly lustrous orange tree;  
Moonlight, of course. They say the lady died  
Before the heroics were even fairly started.

Yet such things happen. Here, I think, we find  
The true beginning where the story ends.  
One tells no more. We know she left behind  
Relatives, beautiful enemies, false friends—  
Ask for the tale complete, and they recall  
She perished broken-hearted. That is all.

*by John Jocelyn*

## GETTING AT WALDO FRANK

**W**ALDO David Frank's chosen method of writing, expressionism, is, after all is said, a way natural to him, at least in his rhapsodic moods—and they are frequent. It is failure to recognize this fact that is at the bottom of the frequent misunderstanding of the man and his purposes by the critics whose dislike for the mode prevents their getting at the matter of his work. It is a pity that this is so, because Frank's basic philosophy and ideas are good for all of us, especially now when any self-hood worth the keeping is in danger of being lost in the leveling process of standardization of thinking as well as of living. Though far removed in temperament and method, Henry David Thoreau is like Waldo David Frank in his belief in the cultivation of the self, in the worthwhileness of being as opposed to getting. Both men are fundamentally alike in their valuation of the essentials of living; to neither is life, or rather living life, necessarily the complex, confusing experience that many think must be made of it in the pursuit of happiness.

It is good to see that Thoreau is gaining appreciation; it is well for those who would follow him in his straight thinking and simple living. It would be well, too, if more would seek and find the stimulating independence that is in Frank. It is clear, however, that one who might be pleased by reading Thoreau could easily be repelled by Frank before he really grasped his meaning and aim, and a pity it is; for with life encroaching more and more upon the independence of the individual, Waldo David Frank with Henry David Thoreau are prophets crying to us in a wilderness of materialism, pointing the way that he who would be saved to himself must follow.

Because of this pronounced departure from the normal in his style, distaste, then, rather than misunderstanding, is Waldo David Frank's portion of general interest. Since understanding must wait upon investigation, and investigation upon some method of approach, it might be conducive to a better understanding of Waldo David Frank to try to analyze his mode and cite a few characteristic instances of his use of it. Expressionism has been

deplored often enough, it would seem, to have given us some inkling of what it is, but perhaps a review of some authoritative definitions of it will help to overcome dislike for its unusualness long enough to recognize the value of Frank's thought. In that event, there is no doubt that interest will follow.

According to Dr. Pfister expressionism is: "the endeavor to express through Art . . . the inner self of the artist." Of course, there is a tendency of the inner self to engross the interest so much that the external either disappears altogether or becomes unrecognizable through total or almost total distortion. The thinking expressionist uses this distortion for emphasis. It is this rationalized manner that gives reason for Waldo Frank's work being described as "too intellectualized", not organic,—of inherent development, as are the novels of D. H. Lawrence, another seeker after the cosmic. However, it will be granted, I think, by anyone who reads much of Waldo David Frank that his sounding of self is honestly for the purpose of sensing a kind of mystical knowledge of the inner nature of objects as well as of the inner self, and since Frank is a real part of the Cosmos he seeks to fathom, with which he is so much concerned, he should have learned in his probing something authentic about it all.

With Bahr, one might be inclined to prefer a middle ground between impressionism, Goethe's "beholding without thinking", and expressionism, an inner seeing power, that middle ground being the method of Leonardo, Rembrandt, Cezanne, a self-conscious recognition of the interactive character of experience. We have the statement of Reiser that: "It will be noted that the properties of every emergent in nature bears some relation to the total structure of the universe. Man, therefore, is not to be regarded as a by-product of the different forces of nature. And the appearance of the first living organism was not a mysterious accident, but bears some definite relation to the pattern of cosmic evolution. It will also be observed that in the doctrine of the relation of 'mind' and 'matter' . . . the present view approaches closely to that of Spinoza, whom Goethe called the 'God intoxicated'." It is quite legitimate that Waldo Frank, also Jewish, should have the same tendency. It is also clear that his method has basis in truth.

In none of his writings is Waldo Frank's expressionism more vivid, more warmly human and at the same time logically analytic than in his lyrical *Our America*. Here the poet is again the seer.



Frank's lyricism is truly Hebraic; he is by right of inheritance prophetic. What he says of Van Wyck Brooks may also be applied to his own purposes: "For the new consciousness which he is helping to create is one in which all life should enter, and which shall have no end save to bring resolves all in a mind that is a burning aspiration for the life seen in the America of Whitman's vision." It is his privilege to speak for East and West, for all the needs of life. Here, if anywhere, he sounds self for the good of all. He is a realist who has achieved mysticism: "The spiritual power is man's capacity to feel life as a whole. It is that part of us which dwells within and yet may emerge us with the world. The pioneer had brought such power with him: at least the need of it. It languished for lack of nurture."

More extravert than the pioneer and also made so by circumstances, is the American of today: "Sapped votaries of Matter and Industrialism, the little energy that is left may not rise to creation of beauty nor to its vivifying enjoyment—not even to communion with Nature. The Lump must be pierced by the sensational newspaper or the banal drama. Their dulled consciousness is that of slaves of Mammon, millionaire clubman or shop girl. At the extreme, the dizziness of the incessant whirl, literally at Coney Island, is his notion of pleasure, the typical New Yorker." But there is hope: "Into New York with the young of heart from the West and Middle West, artists and writers, rebels against the drab levels in the wake of the extraverted Pioneer, comes Life to meet the richer thought of the incoming Europe and produce Beauty . . . Out of the turmoil, materialistic, sodden when not shrill with hysteria, a renaissance of spirit."

Picassoesque in its powerful strokes, in the spirit of Dante in its rhapsodic gloom, but truly in his own manner, is Waldo Frank's portrayal of the anomaly that is Chicago: "Chicago is a symbol, a splendid one, not subtle and hidden away but brutal like life itself, and naked clear. A symbol that speaks in the facts of its life. An open city. On the east the fresh Michigan sea. Prairies everywhere else. Let it spread free like the dirty winds that tear it to bits. Even the lake makes contribution of its mud. Widens the shores . . . A dim place at day with its soot and grime and the dust of the plains shedding from its iron conduits. And at night an inferno: red flame and black shadow and the loom of masses sliding on tracks through the torn city . . ."



There is psychological truth in this expressionism: "In the South Side, in what has become the heart of Chicago, stretch the stinking miles of stockyards. Dante would have recognized this world. A sunken city of blood. Black buildings loom over narrow, muddy paths, where the sun cannot dry the slime. Fantastic chutes and passageways twist against the sky, leading into the shadow of muffled houses. Muffled sounds disappear against the reeking walls. Men move about with bloody hands and the whites of their eyes gleaming. Beyond the pens of the cattle. Miles of them also. A prostrate, chartered world for the towering hell. Cut through by steel rails and snorting locomotives. And on the other side, the pens of the men and women who slay the cattle and who, in turn, are consumed . . . But over all, and joining all, over the meat and the men, and the feudal masters, is something else. The spirit of the place—perhaps its soul: an indescribable stench. It is composed of mangled meat, crushed bone, blood soaking the floors, corroding the steel, the sweat. A stench that is warm and thick, and that is stubborn. A stench somehow sorrowful and pregnant, as if the sweat of men joined with the guts of beasts brought forth a new drear life . . . Chicago is the dream of the industrial god. Chaos incarnate . . . The miracle of Chicago is that it is something else. The miracle is that this stew of steel and smoke should be inhabited by men and women . . ."

Less vivid in color, subtler in its strokes, but in its way as alive and thoughtful and thought provoking as *Our America*, and perhaps more appealing to the fancy, is *Virgin Spain—Scenes from the Spiritual Drama of a Great People*. To illustrate faithfully the striking analysis, the unusual insight characteristic of the book would be but to repeat it. The following excerpts are proffered as mere suggestions: "I have never seen a sky so far from my head: I have never seen a world so sharp in my eye. The sky lifts me to realm of visions. And as I pass into its moveless search, still I stand fixed within this graphic world . . . Everywhere sky. So far away, and everywhere. Its apartness is a force lifting the broken things of Spain as in a great dance Godward. Dust and sheep-hoof, ash of cigarette, pound of the shepherd's staff on the earth, swish of chaps, the dog's soft pads against the stone . . . rise all in this various harmony, as in a dance to the sky."

As a vital factor in the Spanish whole, the desert of Northern

Africa, and Islam, are noted in a wealth of phrasing, colorful and plastic: "The sun stands beside the minaret that forms part of the west wall of the town. The eastern mountain is gold and over it lies a pallid crescent moon. There will be moonlight tonight upon the desert! . . . In the desert night is reason; the day is magic and madness . . . This is a law of the desert and of the desert dwellers . . . The world of the day is a world of violence. It has no water and it has no sweetness. It is the world of this life; best spent in marching, passionate, shrewdly toward the dusk. Night is man's kingdom, his dear reality; it is a place of gardens under which flow waters: it is a place of measurable fires: a place of shadows and of meditations: a place of dew and love . . . Wonder therefore not at the triumph of Mohammed, master of lands of desolation, who leads his people still across a day of flame to the revealing of his dusky paradise."

More developed than in most people, distinct to the point of individuality, Waldo Frank finds the personalities of the Spanish towns. Different even in its kind of maidenhood is Seville: "You have seen a young girl in some peasant road step endimanchée from her house to the sun. The velvet bosom of her bodice rises. A jewel at her neck, a ring on her finger, an eye gleaming brighter than the jewel. Her song runs with the Spring sun and the grass. You know that the peasant girl loves and is loved. Love has wrought this miracle on her flesh. And so, in Seville; the miracle of her streets is the same alchemy. She is adance with the magic of fondness; she is gay in a perpetual Spring of self-delight."

Comes Valencia the colorful: "Spain, with face turned east from the sea, takes her afternoon siesta. She has dined well. Soup of seven meats, codfish, the seven meats, cheese rich as manure, Galician green, Toledan mazapan, Sevillian dulces, wines from Malaga, Jerez, and La Mancha, heroic tobacco from the Canary Islands, fill her. She was hungry, for her day had been active. She had served and fused the wills of many peoples: swift Phoenicians, heavy-headed Romans, meteoric Greeks, Goths with wild hair and tender eyes, intricate introvert Jews, Arabs with convictions about the materiality of the Cosmos, Moors whose blood was fierce like Atlas avalanches, sportsmen like the Cid whose charity was of the sword, whose religion was of the moment, mystics of Castile parsing Christ with Horace, Spaniards at last . . . Torquemada, Isabella, Celestina . . . makers of the dominance of Castile.

✓

So Spain was hungry and heartily ate: and was weary and heavily slept. And her dream was a city of the eastern coast. Its name Valencia. Its streets a Carnival. Its life a Masquerade . . . Mecca, Fez annul each other here. Turbulent Valencia does nothing. It is a dream of Spain, laden with her ages."

An opportunity to probe the subjective in another Waldo Frank finds to his hand in the lyricism of Ramon de la Serna: "Essence of dream takes the conforming shape of the categories of the intellect; and the objective sense for once is applied to what is real. This mysterious hinterland Ramon de la Serna has made his realm. He has mastered it. He has been mastered by it . . . wherefore the contradictions in his work. Rich in color, it is evanescent. Affluent in intimations of form, it is formless. His books are collections of uncollectable items. His true form is chaos. He is indeed the runner of a rainbow; and should he stop one moment, he would fall through mist. His one subject is the instant of palpable inarticulation."

Illustrative of Frank's Hebraic lyricism is his prose-poem on El Greco, the Greek who expressed not only Spain but the upward-soaring spirit of the Europe of his time: "The spirit of Israel and Byzantium does not die in Spain, because it has become flesh of the body. The Jew may go into his alien ghettos; the Arab may rot in the Levant. Here is a man to blaze their truth upon the walls of churches—and with a color so wise, that the walls crumble ere his word grows dim . . . His work is the crowning plastic of the west. More and more, as the walls of his stiff world moulder, El Greco is seen to express not alone Toledo, not Spain alone, but the Christian Synthesis of Europe at its highest luminous pitch. His aesthetic is one of incarnation. He possesses an idea . . . The spirit informs these heads and torsos, much as the spirit informs the Substance of Spinoza. This is an aesthetic to be found in Egyptian sculpture. The archaic Greeks knew it, and the classic Greeks, growing analytical, abandoned it . . . In his essence, the fierce passion of its flaming, he is far closer to the Hebrews . . . Here is a vision of a Mystery which like flame flows forth from God, is held to God, and is a form, in its commotion, of God's immutable, immobile essence. Here is a mystery not transcendental, not neo-platonic. But Dante and Spinoza would have hailed it, without loss of their own nature."

It is in his fiction, of necessity, that Frank's arbitrary style is

most evident. As in the composition, form and color of a modernistic painting, so in the stories the effects of expressionism stand out strikingly, even forcibly; the intention in the use of distortion to express a meaning and convey an emotion is felt, but not always understood—that is not in the details. Yet, as in any work of art in the modernistic style, each part in its place bears a close relation to the whole and would by a change of position alter not only the pattern, but also the feeling and the meaning of the whole. Such a story is highly intellectualized, but at the same time subjective because the development cannot be inherent in the characters and limited by an arbitrary form. Nevertheless, and with no special liking for the form, the reader will not fail to discern philosophical and social appeal.

This studied unity of the whole precludes the possibility of quoting except for a hint at the philosophy and for detached examples of expressionism. For example, the situation in *Under the Dome*, accounted one of the best stories of 1921, revolves about the common life of a husband and wife, each groping for the good as each sees it, and because they see it unlike are both thwarted and unhappy. Esther Lanich, the more mental of the two, is aware of finer distinctions, senses the possibility of spirituality in living and is numbed by the crass and the obtuse about her. Feeling abhorrent futility in life, she at times hates her child, a girl, for being a part of it. Her state of mind is palpable in her words: "My eyes see beauty. What for? O there is no God. If there is God, what for? . . . He will come back and work. He will eat and work. He is kind and good. What for? . . . What else does he do with his love? Make another like Flora? God forbid. What for? . . . She sat in a chair, always, near the side wall: her eyes lay burning against the cold glare of the gas . . . The street was a ribbon of velvet blackness laid beside the burning and sharp brightness of the store. The yellow light was hard like grains of sand under the quick of her nails. She was afraid of the street. She was hurt in the store. But the brightness clamped her. She did not move—O let no customers come! 'Keep quiet, Flora.' I cannot move . . . She was clamped. But the store moved, moved."

And Meyer Lanich? Here he is demanding freedom from the shop for a few hours. Not understanding what has stunned his wife's interest in their life, he shouts at her: "But by God, you will keep the store those two hours Friday! Do you hear? By God



what else have I ever asked you for? Don't you sit around, do nothing all day, and aren't Flora's clothes a filth? and hardly if you'll cook our meals. But this you will do: this you will do! Friday nights. Lord, why is there no light in Esther? What have I done, Lord? What have I done?"

The desolate dragged out ending is here depicted: "They walk, a man and woman, down the street to work. A child between them, holding the hand of the man. They are gray. They are sullen. They are caught up in the sullen strife of their relentless life. There is no let to them. There is a barren field with no horizon."

The natural purity and honesty of Fanny Luve, the chief thesis in the novel *Rahab*, may be easily missed by the narrowly puritanical or Waldo Frank's motive in developing the theme utterly misinterpreted, as it has been by critics who are not puritans. To see truly we must think purely, without the disturbing influence, for or against, of passion. A guarantee of Frank's sincerity of intention is that there is nothing prurient in the book; it is even an exhortation of guilt. Certainly, it is naturalistic, for Waldo Frank is a realist, but with mystical implications in his interpretations of life's motives. He is, as usual, seeing life as One, whole. Drawn into marriage by a temperamental boy, driven from him by an inversion of the same emotionalism, Fanny Luve finds herself, at last, alone, ill and starving, facing her position without denials: "God, you aren't much for me. But I believe in you, God. Do you hear? Even now. I am not rotten, God. I have not done wrong, God. You must hear me, for I believe in you, somehow, my Father. This is all right. This is not just; this is not unjust. It is part of the world. But I have been a part. I believe that, God. I have been a part and you need all parts. You have needed me, God? . . . You're casting me in the ash-heap I know. Can't you say at least 'Thank you' before I am gone?"

When Fanny Luve took the stricken, discarded Clara to herself in the House, when she tried to turn Brenner's thought from carnality, when Statt, the soulless, the Lieutenant of Police who protected criminals for a price, who could not buy her to his ways by money or threats, balked, kneeled to kiss the hand of this keeper of a House, saying: "Why are you crazy, Fanny Luve?", did God say "Thank you" to one who was unafraid? No doubt, all this



may be called unusual, theatrical, but it is not untrue; it is the kind of absolute truth that Waldo Frank recognizes.

That Waldo David Frank sees life in the large, as a whole, and writes with the desire to lead others to do likewise is evident in the philosophy of the works cited as instances. A distaste for his philosophy or his style, what has been called his attitude of hierophant and his expressionism, has brought him criticism based on lack of understanding of his purposes as well as by impatience with his mode. Frank is no romantic or reactionary; he does not confuse, for instance, the possibilities for good within the machine with the uses to which it has been put by economic callousness. In a characteristic article, "The Machine and Metaphysics", he again stresses his belief in being as opposed to getting; he sees the machine as an adjunct to man, not man as the servant of the machine.

"With the tool came beauty, because it was a subtly extended and yet obedient hand bringing between subject and object that harmony which is beauty's norm . . . Finally with the tool came fullness: for that man alone is unified and full who has spent himself in self-expressive labor. And by contrast the man is empty and disrupted who has been spent in labor which excludes his deep co-operation. So far, then, the pessimists of the machine are right. But here their rightness ends. Could they look back upon what must have been the experience of man ere he mastered the tool, they might more sanguinely look forward . . . Now with the machine we are once more primitive . . . But if we dominate the machine—make it part of ourselves—we shall win control over a realm of nature which includes mankind; for man's will, other men's wills are constant and determining factors of the machine . . ."

"But such a machine would possess the human consciousness of a Spinoza. No less! No less is needed in order that the human world may not go down before this new nature—the free spawning mechanical invention. The modern machine converges with the wisdom of the ages to force man ahead. From India, from Judea, from Greece, from Germany, has come the single canon: that life is unitary, that experience is One. The machine will compel us at this human crisis to experience what heretofore great men have merely known. The machine makes metaphysics man's most practical engagement."

Inherent in Waldo David Frank is his obsession with human betterment—he is engaged with the visions of the prophets—and a part of that conscious desire for human salvation is a willed rhapsodic style, a studied medium, but also inherent. It is all One, as he would say. Diverse may be the channels, Puritanism, Industrialism, the warring elements in Spain, the toilers, the keeper of a House, the writer, the artist, the philosopher, visions of a possible good:

"But all, in their unlikeness blend  
Confederates to one golden end  
Beauty: the vision whereunto—  
In joy, with paintings from afar,  
Through sound and odour, form and hue,  
And mind and clay, and worm and star—  
Now touching goal, now backward hurled—  
Toils the indomitable."

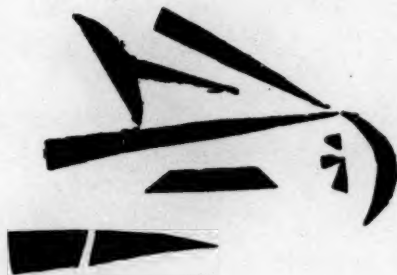
*by William Davidson*

## THE FUGITIVES

And always from afar I followed them  
And wondered why they passed strange beauty by.  
Rough-tumbled, I knew not their strategem,  
Nor called to them, nor ever asked them why  
They fled, nor why at night they sang old tunes  
In this new land where grass grew tall, and trees  
Dripped bitter honey in the heat of moons  
Too red and suns too white. With singing ease  
They fled untangled in the jungle's maze;  
With haste I followed after when for days  
Came hot-lipped jungle voices on the breeze,  
Stirring to new desire the young typhoons.  
But finally from afar I heard them cry,  
And homeward over the hills I followed them.

# L'EXIL

## A Tertiary Review



PIERRE DISTRAIT QUINTUS  
*Editor-Publisher*

NEERG, REGRUB, AND NOTTAP  
*Accomplices*

Volume the First

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# L'EXIL

## SILISTRIA

In taking up our new abode we feel constrained to make elucidations to the American public, as we were compelled to make to their officials who deported us when we arrived on these coasts three months ago. This is not a new review, but past events have not gone unheeded and necessity forces us to assume a new mask to evade detection from our former pursuers who would go to no length to exterminate us as they have in the past, and finally not for our own lives, but for that of our followers we were compelled to flee for whatever refuge we could find. In our own dear land we hold a high place in the hearts of the intellectual schools of modern thought, but, that which we held as our *raison d'être* caused political intrigues of which we are entirely innocent, but bureaucracies are incredulous of open honesty and the stronger hand of force made us seek a new refuge.

We state, therefore, that as in the past our interests are art, literature, and music, of what is the only sound type. Our accomplices and contributors, each in their own field, will testify to you of these things, and that which seems most recondite is not to be cryptic

but is thus stated because of its manifest truths of which we are ardent exponents. In pressing ourselves on your attention we trust you will not pass by the factors that make for a man's existence and maintenance.

P. D. Q.

## WHO ARE OUR CONTRIBUTORS?

### *On the Staff,*

IGNAION NEERG, has suffered deportation three times from jealous officials. He has now succeeded in qualifying the conditional entrance under subveillance. At the present he is engaged in insuring the population of Kentucky of his good-will mission, to them.

HASHI REGRUB, was born on board ship in the Aegean. After studying at the Univ. of Themopolis

he was instrumental in promoting home industry among rug-weavers in Arabia and Afganistan. He is temporarily engaged in teaching Aramaic at the University in Porto Gulfo, on the Gulf of Mexico.

DIMITRI NOTTAP, has given his life to the pursuit of wild things. The very staid style of his writing as witnessed in the first article testifies the antithesis of occupation and thought. At present he is persuading New York City officials to allow dogs to sleep in the parks at night.

### *Among-Contributors,*

T. Y., because he is so reticent will not give out his name. Whenever he comes to present us his new poetry he wears a mask to escape our searching eyes. He was born in Rotterdam, but has not been back since he was sixty years old.

ISADORA KRONSTHAL was born on a ranch in Idaho, studied at the Univ. of Nevada, and Peking Municipal College. She now has her own studio in Yugo-Slavia where

great advances have been made in the newer forms of art.

ADOLPHE ZENSCOV began life as an Officer in the King's guard, but finding wars so few and far between has taken up a life of drink in his studio on the Blvd. Montparnasse in Paris.

MAURICE JACOPOZZI was formerly connected with the Second and third Internationale but was expelled because of his radical views. He is now secretly engaged in forming a Fourth Internationale, but no one can secure information about the membership at present.

## IS SENSIBILITY SENSE?

the equatorial bite in the bluish rock weighs upon the night inmate scent of ammoniacle cradles the flower is a lamp-post doll listens to the mercury which mounts which shows the windmill holding on the viaduct before yesterday is not the ceramic of the chrysanthemum which turns the head and the cold the hour sounded in your mouth once more a broken angel which falls until the many have not become for object follows upon sight chicanery made man less more not then but this has not the connotation of his speechless tones relegated consternation made thus invaluable in night air by which has which none which are not or to see smoke blown out before puffed in the doll's nostrils made horror rampant in handsome cars none-the-less time take by the fore-lock would be less restive in a recurrent sense the offense offered a bagarre arouses idiosyncrasies unknown in sign language abominable terrestrial comfort demand erection of composite cannailes that encumber life before followers will lead it must be preserved but not in red or violet for their sensibility causes genres to stagnate in tear-pools which academic dogmas believe we are or may not or would not in the human's course of coarse eventualities submerge the more component factors who would diverge in revision to a hero more sensibly than a rattle-snake blew blue of office furniture at advanced cinemas whose literary loves sink deep in etherial rhapsodies all genius being misconstrued for misanthropic sentiments cause abnormal ox on a roof to shun the finer company of none but the



least low of our present perpetually apothegms to have not family resemblances but changes manners with our proprietorial dark disclamour yet downward in heights prophetically promethian of cut zohar zones zeburu yuck yojan yet xenotime xerophagy zimmer yeux yarrow zymosimeter zoids yaourt xyzter quadra-trix quantity quail quamoclit

none but nonsensical nonentities will disparage that there were two together, there were two, two together there were two, two together who would say different when there were two together, again two, together two they were together, what could induce two together but two together in stranger scenes two together to two still all consistent two together insist on the two, for were too tow two together would cease but two being together two together to tow or to two to two together two till to two.

## EXPLICIT EXPLICATION

In comment we can do no better than quote Stein "and so the art creation of the contemporary composition which would have been outlawed before the war, normally outlawed several generations more than behind the war, war having been so to speak up to date art so to speak was was allowed not completely to be up to date, but nearly up to date, in other words we who create the expression of our modern composition were recognized or to be recognized before we were dead. and so some of us even a long time before we were dead. and so war may be said to have advanced composition almost thirty years."

This begs all comment, and I am told that for those who are equipped with faculties for appreciation no explanation is or would seem necessary; as for the others no amount of explanation will effect conversion. Most prose sketches are abstract patterns which make no pretence of touching reality at any point. Others, with an element of reality, have carried rhythmic word-play word association, and evocation to interesting extremes. Prose affords a unique pleasure to those who can enjoy abstract art. Who would and deny the best in life?

# The Running Scale

**Ignazio Neerg**

The *Dodas* are dead and with them we bury all the archaic forms of harmony and rythm. Too long has the five and eight half-tone scale prevailed. All the discords of Bach, Stravinsky, and Alexoff have weighed heavily on our civilization. Piano manufacturers have also been an impediment to the real progress of Music, though we shall have to bother with that for some time to come. Capitalism has sustained the Opera, and the Salvation Army and M. E. So., the cornet trade. However the public, according to the old Roman proverb, cannot be fooled all of the time, and the advent of Lombardo is heartily welcomed. But even he adheres too closely to call his work art. True kakaphoney can best be produced by harmonizing a thirty-second tone against a seventy-seventh or a fifth quarter tone. The bases are rarely heavy enough while the treble becomes so shrill as to drive one out of the concerts. The editorial in the last Junior League magazine points out this trend in present-day developments, but are entirely too bold in prognosticating the outcome, in fact we venture to say that the end is not yet in sight, and that our preliminary exeperiments only serve to establish our former tenets on a firmer basis. The rise in the gold standard has served largely as an indication of support in our idealized harmonies. Again time has always been accounted and it is only lost time that counts in the final reckoning, for at that point no one, much less the performer, knows what has occurred before the finish and after the start. Our latest development in our Minorial Quartet has been in incongruity temporal-key staff. By this method we are enabled to execute at the same time four different tempos in four different keys simultaneously whereby an advantage is gained in both richness of quality as well as an advance in the exchange rate. This is a vast improvement over the so-called Covington rondo method which at first threatened to supercede our more congenial form. A whole month has been devoted to research in 7-19 time which has caused hopes to soar high.

## Kes Po Quis Reben

*Break will heart my or  
Day by waves its or, night by winds it  
Spray salt sea's the of sing, never but  
Hay and wheat winter of sing and  
lake and hills of, yill you if sing so*

*Foam the to heart my and  
Free and waves gray wild the to heart  
my and  
Sea the to life my given have I, alas but  
Me of part a are grass and trees and  
Home childhood my are lakes and mountains the  
T. Y.*

## ODE TO SPRING

*SteAM plane caFFEINE violet cast rAged  
calf? FORTy in stone THOUSANDS clad vaLLey  
for A Dionysus skySKRaper moon wearing  
three and onE HALf rubber bOOts gum.*

V. S.

## QUARRY

*The howl of Night Wind  
Thrown in the  
Wilderness:—  
"The Universe is a  
Blemish in the  
Purity of non-being",  
What mortal seeks  
This  
Who's aggressive  
Torments blurs  
To blind and bury  
Far down  
It scurries . . .*

T. Y.

## HEIGHTS

*The day closes  
While I on the  
Parapet stand  
He whom my  
Name encloses  
Is deep in a  
Dungeon lain  
I busy myself  
In building a  
Wall  
Plastered with  
Dust and Sand  
So no hole remains  
I sweep onward  
To alieve my grief.*

ADOLPH ZENSCOV

## Factory Life

*We never go at  
A walk;  
We leave  
We leave  
The world behind us,  
Borne on  
By  
Two wild horses.  
The town  
Expands,  
And reaches out in all directions,  
And  
Seems to multiply  
Itself;  
The river rejoins it, leaves  
It,  
Goes round it,  
Passes  
Through  
It.*

ADOLPHE ZENSCOV

## FIELDS &amp; ROSES

*The serpent Spoke  
Beneath the heated Rocks,  
Its tuneless songs freezes,  
Hearts are snow,  
O! Death.  
For from its eyes  
There protrudes  
The unspeakable,  
O, Death!  
As from the fire  
Expanses of eternal ice,  
O Death!*

T. Y.



## ANALOGOUS ABSTRACTIONSIM

ISADORA KRONSTHAL

The self that is expressed is a bundle of inherited tendencies that man can never know entirely whence. We will make you feel art against your own will. The errors of Dufy, Vlaminck, and Picasso must be extricated and the fact that they have so easily given way before each little wave of attack only goes to show how and where. For those whose noses are already worn down on the millstone of the academies we prognosticate but little hope. "Pure beauty," as Winckelmann said long ago, "is like pure water, it has no taste". Yet this sublimity of desire is but a shadow for our artists. Why leisure when all demands are made on us for more speed? What the artist needs is work and more work, the incessant pressure of active life, exorbitant demands on all his powers, driving him onward to higher and harder problems. The child's play that the middle ages and renaissance indulged in has been a disgrace on the high name of art. Art for beauty's sake, or any other abstraction will not thrive in America or any other kingdom until the exploitation of international dealers in little pots of imported oils, that will never exert an iota of influence on life or thought means that if we have an ingenious expression it must proceed from the products at hand. The meanest materials at hand serve best for the expression we are serving to present. An error which has been the retention of colour. Never will we achieve our scheme until all use of colour is discontinued. This has persisted in spite of protest, none daring to brave the storm of revilings that this practice calls down on itself. In the privacy of my studio I have worked long on this problem on

canvas after canvas, and only lately at the "Exhibition aux Toits" has recognition been awarded. From henceforth I am having my pupils follow unhesitatingly what I have laboured to make them see. Formless, senseless, colourless art is the note of the new school. Old prejudices are hard to overcome, but we will persist in our evangel, failure is impossible, while scores are turning to us for this new revelation in terrestrial crafts. The point to drive everlastingly at is: dispose of the material medium—pigments first, brushes and similar embarrassments next, then the canvas, board, and all analogous impediments which obstruct the abstract expression of the pure inane.

### Notes and Wanderings

One of the last times I saw Joyce he spent the afternoon reading and commenting upon passages. Thus he took the phrase, "Phoenix culpa", and explained, "Now here you have a suggestion (bow J. is speaking) of *felix culpa*—the blessed sin of the early Church Fathers—that is to say the downfall of Adam which brought redemption into the world; and you have a suggestion, not only of the garden of Eden, but of Phoenix Park in Dublin, and of Irish history with its wrongs and crimes, and you have the eternal way of man." In these lights it is not difficult to pursue each phrase and render every thought liquid.

Or the phrase, "Nach Paris" which has caused no little consternation times past because of the obscurity of the preposition *nach*. Some authorities take it to mean *to* or *towards*, and thereby maligned our Teutonic brothers in their attempt to near the city of men's hopes. Other scholars put their emphasis on *nach* as meaning *after*, thereby implying "after Paris what". Yes, we exclaimed with them, after Paris what do you want? Had they employed "a Paris" or "apres Paris" the inner meaning would have been clear, and we could all go "a Paris" and remaining not worry about "apres Paris", for who leaves permanently after once being there?

TOURT OLA

Syndicalism in Europe, Coffee burnings in Brazil, and tidal waves in Asia occupy the mind of millions while few stop to regard their destructive influence on our prose style. To whom can we appeal to? All men to cease their strife over straining at the gnat while we swallow the elephant whole? Since our contemporary *Blues* met a violent fate at the hand of creditors, we continue our protest against the vested interests in electroplate and a standard of criticism encouraged to protect and further them. We also inveigh against the printing of fragments of novels in reviews, for who can tell that it is a slice of life, or would care to pursue it further were he cognizant of the fact? Thence to Rapallo we are indebted and unless Brancusi fires back our line is safe.

## Latest Agitations of the (Press)

WORK WAITING TO BE FINISHED by Andre Bloch.

This little book of essays should not pass our desk unheeded or unhailed. M. Bloch is a writer of a coterie of research artists hard at work in Carminia (USSR) who are trying to discover to whom the canvas should belong after paint has ruined one side of it. In this voluminous work he relates the domestic difficulties of the late Sultan prior to his 79th marriage. (M. Bloch is the son of that last ill-fated wife: his real name is Kalosives Allahamaridk) It can be procured for 5 pesos or through our special agency located at Brestlitov.

THE COW LAUGHS by Henrich vonSchlect is a book of poems from the able pen of the former editor of the *Morgenschweck* in Kleinheim. In these artistic overtures we find gross indulgence combined with apathy and retrogressive notions of rhythm. It is written in alexandrine. We suggest that Herr vonSchlect either join us or retire from the scene.

LOS PLANTOS by Juan Ibanez is a Novel of the present-day life in the eastern Andes. Sr. Ibanez is a native of Chile and has first-hand knowledge of his material. A boy is born, works, marries, has a family of 17, is blind and finally dies. Each of his children follows closely in the footsteps of his father. It is a penetrating and spiritual work.

We suggest for your pursuit, *Das Weib*, Max Rocco (London) *Qui l'a Fait*, G. St. Lewis-Loti (Berlin) *One of Many*, Sam. Tsinmos (San Marco) *Bai ou Ez*, K. Mikkros (Athens) *Volmanshi*, Paul Smith (Bogata)

From our Welsh correspondent the following note just came to us: "Ni chaiff gelyn ladd as ymlid, Harlech, cwyd iw herlid: Y mae Rhoddwr mawr ein Rhyddid, yn rhoi nerth i ni; wele Gymru a'i mynyddbedd! Rhuthrant fel rhaiadru dyfroedd llamanant fel y lli. Rwystro bar yr estron, cwybod yn i galon gaiff. Fels brtha cleddyf Brython."

### Man's Care

You deem pain and evil  
Pleasure good.  
And even pleasure evil,  
If it takes more than gives,  
Or causes pain great than pleasure  
If pleasure is an evil,  
To some other end or standard,  
And pain a good,  
Who have you left to show an end?

MAURICE JACCOPOZZI

*by Frances Theresa Russell*

## MELODRAMATIC MRS. WHARTON

**P**ATRICIAN and proud of it—this is the announcement made by any portrait of Edith Wharton. The perfect lady is proclaimed in every line of the stately coiffure, serene brow, thin lips, firm chin, pearl-encircled neck, gracefully sloping shoulders, and costume of quiet elegance. So classic is it that the eyes are those of a marble statue, as expressionless under the drooping lids as though they were empty sockets. The picture suggests an alabaster lamp exquisitely carved and unlighted.

This impression is confirmed by the biographical record, meager as that is; indeed in the scantiness itself lies an added significance. Few of our celebrities have kept themselves so remote and escaped so completely from the publicity which usually makes the public performer into something of a public personage. But what little we do know shows such a harmony between face and life that each one quite adequately explains the other.

Hers is the mouth of the silver spoon. She was born into a family of means, distinction, and metropolitan environment; was educated by private tutors and foreign travel; married a gentleman evidently content to efface himself so thoroughly that he isn't even a background. The story of her career is one hundred percent Edith. Not Edward nor another intrudes even to the point of calling for a plural pronoun. Mrs. Wharton is consistently singular, insulated, surrounded only by her own aura. The snakes-in-Iceland explorer was loaded down in comparison to any collector so rash as to go gunning for anecdotes, intimate incidents, or sidelights on this preëminent novelist.

As a writer she has not been idle. If called to account for her ten talents of health, leisure, freedom, and all fortunate circumstances, she can wave an assured complacent hand toward the trim substantial row of her artistic offspring: fourteen full grown novels, eight half sized novelettes, eight volumes of short stories, six books of personal narration and scenic description, two booklets of verse, a translation or so, and a treatise on her own art of fiction. An average of about a book a year for the forty years she



has been publishing is a credible list for quantity alone, and this collection is of superior quality—as high as it is long.

The exact nature of that excellence is another question. A countenance may be a mask and a biography but a tale of the superficial and obvious. It is to a creator's creation, the results of his chosen work, that we must look for inward revelation. At least from the honeycomb we do not deduce the spider nor from ensnaring web the bee. That anything sponsored by Edith Wharton must be impeccably correct and exquisitely choice goes without saying. But the first dip into her fiction shows she is not so impassive as she looks, and up to the last emergence we realize increasingly that the expressionism of her impressionism is woven, stamped, and colored by melodrama.

Melodrama is a dog with a bad name. That any lady of high degree should be caught in the neighborhood of such a yellow cur, much worse owning it, worst of all using it as a mascot or yielding to its tutelary influence, is unthinkable. But when we squint back to origins and recall that it was merely music that put the melo into drama, we must admit that to belong to the melody clan is not so low and that in ancestry this despised canine ranks with any noble hound or genteel spaniel. If it has fallen to vile estate it is through evil companions and vulgar associations. Hence, although often exhibiting itself as crude and gaudy, it is not essentially so. And if it was not too flamboyant and meretricious for Shakespeare, we may grant to our later and lesser geniuses what traffic they like with this form of dramatized art, without the discount of being put on the defensive.

The evolution of melodrama, whether or no it is degeneration, has been from song to sensationalism. It is the thing to snub or patronize our sensations for their primitive and animal status, while we laud our higher emotions and respectfully admire our still loftier intellects. These are indeed the flower and fruit of that stem which is rooted in the earth but not for a moment to be ignored. All experience comes to us through the senses. To be sensuous is inevitable, to be sensual is to stop with the physical, and to be sensational is to revel in the fanciful at the expense of fact and truth. Melodrama has grown into such an alliance with this substratum of life whose sap permeates all the rest that it now connotes an undue or illegitimate emphasis on this elementary appeal. Its earmarks are love of the picturesque and ad-

venturous, and a craving for the sort of romance that stimulates the nerves and soothes the mind.

In fiction the melodramatic is distinguished by a reliance on coincidence, not merely the startling connections that sometimes do happen in fate's random incalculable manner, but such neat symmetric mechanisms as can click only at the command of a human inventiveness. From comedy, farce, and tragedy it draws to suit its own purposes. From tragedy it lifts the tension, terror, threatened danger, to contribute the necessary thrill. From farce it plucks the comic relief and riotous abandon. From comedy it levies the ultimate happy ending by turning the threats into false alarms, and providing a sweet but illogical solution after our feelings have been harrowed just enough for good exercise but not enough for grief and dismay.

These melodramatic signs and tokens abound in Edith Wharton's work, and they manifest themselves in her plots, characters, backgrounds, emotions, ideas, and the style that depicts them all. She says herself that "The art of rendering life in fiction can never be anything but the disengaging of crucial moments from the welter of existence." It is no theory or practice of hers to plant a camera just anywhere in front of this seething welter and let it transfer its inconsequent flatness to a sensitized plate. Her process is carefully selective, as she illustrates in one of her first titles, "Crucial Instances", and the selection is aided by an imagination with a strong preference for the extraordinary and marvelous.

Mrs. Wharton's fictitious world is one in which total strangers sit aimlessly chatting on hotel verandahs just in time to overhear a remark that reveals their mutual interest in the woman under discussion, and betrays the subterfuge that sacrificing "Pelican" had been carrying on for years. It is one in which total strangers dine habitually at the same café, and one of them turns out to be precisely the man the other one has been commissioned to find because his wife had lost him as hopelessly as a needle in a haystack until his daughter needed the paternal presence at her wedding or she couldn't be married. It is a world in which a desperate young man reaches by a long, circuitous route a lodging-house just in time to hear the sobs of an even more desperate young woman in the next room, and to save her marked-down life. It is a world in which middle-aged gentlemen finally enroute to meet their early lady-loves, who had married other men but

were now conveniently widowed and available, run plump into young girls also enroute and are so deflected that they never reach any goal at all. It is a world in which a middle-aged divorcée achieves her first real romance with a younger man who afterwards is discovered to be her own daughter's fiancé; a Henry Esmond situation with ramifications that would make simple Thackeray cock a startled eye. It is a world in which superintendents are ill and allusive letters arrive and blackmailers intrude just in the nick of time to precipitate coil upon coil of consequences. "At last a coincidence!" exclaims Martin Boyne. "Certainly it was an odd coincidence," muses Undine Spragg. It certainly was, and there were dozens more, even stranger. And when the plot does not quite coagulate into a coincidence it thickens to a good stiff consistency with complication and linked intrigue long drawn out. These concatenations of events are most in evidence in *Sanctuary*, where history repeats itself in a perfect parallelism; in *The Fruit of the Tree*, where all the relationships are intricate; and in *The Reef*, where a network of deception and clandestine affairs makes a tense detective story with the detective left out. In this last novel occurs Mrs. Wharton's most effective use of dramatic irony, always a prime device for heightening a extra gusto, as if herself fascinated by the gruesomely eloquent situation.

Better still as a guaranteed thriller is the summoning of the supernatural to the human conclave. In the nine or ten short stories of this type, in which Edith Wharton is perhaps most directly influenced by Henry James, she invokes her ghosts with an extra gusto, as if herself fascinated by the gruesomely eloquent eyes, the avenging hounds, the uncanny bell, the phantom factotum who strangles disobedient housekeepers, and all such apparitions. To present these inhabitants of an immaterial sphere as though taken seriously may imply a belief in the esoteric that amounts to a philosophy, or may be simply an exercise of efficient artistry. To infer either intent or attitude would be dogmatic, but the fact that Mrs. Wharton's spectral phenomena are not explained away as hallucinations or tricks or any kind of abnormal psychology, but are accredited by the flesh and blood they haunt if not by the author of them all, is cited for whatever significance it may have.

In any case, his feminine disciple is devotedly Jamesian in her

method of placing ordinary mortal occurrences in an atmosphere charged with electric mystery. Even when actual ghosts are absent the symbolic are present and ubiquitous. Imps of subtlety dance in the hovering vapor of tea-cups. Gnomes of suspicion float from cigarette smoke. Demons of misunderstanding and of tacit understanding caper in the coals of the drawing-room grate. Sprites of innuendo lurk under the damask sofas. Specters of ironic memories peep from the velvet hanging. The butler announces an arrival as though betraying a state secret, and a confab in a gentleman's study has the ominous import of a star chamber session. What with all these delicate nuances and this continual much ado about not so much, it is natural in this "game she plays, pitting herself against a situation to see how much she can score," as Mr. Sedgwick remarks, that she should "give her subjects vastly more vivacity than they would have if left to themselves."

It is indeed more than augmented vivacity that she gives them. She supplies also the roles which bring their qualities into full play. Another sign of melodrama is the subordination of character to plot, the use of people as means to the end of exciting action rather than ends in themselves. In the treatise on her own art this novelist makes the rather obvious statement that fiction was born when the inward view of the characters was substituted for the external, and took its first step when these *dramatis personae* advanced from types to individuals. Yet her actors are seen more from without than within, and they are more typical than individual. In disengaging their crucial moments from the inane welter she does undoubtedly cast upon them the sharp illumination of a crisis, just as an instant's lightning flash reveals more vividly than hours of steady sunlight. But the revelation is intensive rather than comprehensive, and its glare lights up symbols and exempla more often than personalities.

What these characters most frequently exemplify is the power of environment. Mrs. Wharton is deeply impressed with the importance of backgrounds, and her stage-sets are at least melodramatic enough to be appropriate to the activities emanating from them. The standard scene is of course marked by a respectability that looks on the face of it hopelessly dull and commonplace. Geographically it shifts from New York to Paris, with brief excursions eastward to Italy and westward to the Mississippi Val-



ley. Socially it rallies around the tea-table, settles in hotel suites or perchance a pension, assembles in women's clubs, progresses from boudoirs and studios to private yachts. Occupationally the men of this milieu are artists, writers, scholars, lawyers, with a scattering of editors, diplomats, engineers, and capitalists; the women are the wives, daughters, or mistresses of these men, beauteous creatures who have no commerce with dish towels or grocery bills.

The few feminine bees among these butterflies merely add foil and variety. There is a trained nurse and a musician and an artist and several lecturers. Lily Bart makes a pitiful and futile effort to be self-supporting, and Susy Branch would have come to as sad an end had the embroiled Nicholas returned just in time. In shop and kitchen we do see the poor old Bunner sisters and little Laura Lou Weston and wistful Mattie Silver. Also in this gloomy farmhouse of the Fromes as well as in the dreary village of North Dormer and its adjacent disreputable Mountain there is a glimpse into rustic New England.

In these exceptions there is enough of the extreme to verge on melodrama, but in the rule and majority where wealth and culture prevail the extremes themselves pass from passive to active parts. That is, the background itself becomes a reciprocal factor in the performances of the characters. The native inhabitants of this world of fashion and luxury are stolidly engaged in holding the fort. The invading bourgeoisie are strenuously battling for a foothold in the sacred precincts. The rebellious are trying to escape from it. Everywhere its totem poles obstruct the course of true love. Always its ornate portals are guarding the élite or locking in the mutinous or extruding the recalcitrant or excluding the trespassers. Thus functioning, the proscenium takes on a lurid tinge and the chorus waxes resonant.

That emotional characters should carry on in this electrified atmosphere is to be expected. Many of them rebound from one violent feeling to another in true melodramatic fashion, while others wear their hearts as closely concealed as stoic or sphinx. Of the finest and highest emotions Edith Wharton's women have the monopoly. Her best—and one suspects her favorite—characters are Justine Brent, Rose Sellars, and Anna Summers Leith. But they and other of their kind were unfortunate in lavishing their affections upon unresponsive or unworthy objects. Almost

as intense as romantic love, and more tenacious, are the instances a victim to the predatory female. But in all this "Costuming the passions", in Stuart Sherman's apt phrase, there is slight display of the ugly or brutal. There is little of mortal agony and less of rapt ecstasy. These people are not possessed by their emotions for better or worse, nor driven by them to frantic deeds. The only murders in Mrs. Wharton's sagas are, with a minor exception or two, committed by ghosts.

As to the relation of emotion to social status, Katharine Gerould utters her relief that her sister-novelist refrained from lingering with the starved samples of humanity up country. She applauds her for keeping mainly to the aristocrats "who have leisure to experience their own emotions, and the education to show them how these emotions fit into the traditions of the race." That dictum would be more persuasive if we had any evidence that Bessy Westmore or Ellen Olenska or Ralph Marvell cared a whoop how their emotions fitted into traditions or anything else; or that Ethan Frome and Mattie Silver and Charity Royall and Ann Eliza Bunker tasted their griefs on less sensitive tongues than the veriest elegantzia. Pain is a visitant that falls like the rain upon all alike, of maternal devotion, touching even when they sprout rank weeds of fussy management or go to seed in absurd sacrifices. As for her men in love, there is little to choose between the Don Juans and the Don Quixotes. There is the salacious possessive autocratic male, or the prudish cad, or the sentimental cavalier destined to fall and what difference there is in its reception is in favor of those who have ampler protective facilities and greater compensations. It is upon the exposed and the deprived that blows fall with full force and no remedy, and it is to Edith Wharton's credit that she is aware of this.

Still, she gives little impression of feeling with or for the sufferers she creates. Indeed the only personal emotion she indulges in is not over people at all but for the country she has adopted as Henry James adopted England. France is her lyric love, the entire theme and setting of six or seven of her books and partly so for as many more. Bea Sorenson was no more agog over Gopher Prairie as she gawked her way up Main Street than was John Durham as he gloated over "The vast and consummately ordered spectacle of Paris; its look of having been boldly and deliberately planned as a background for the enjoyment of life, in-

stead of being forced into grudging concession to the festive instincts or barricading itself against them in unenlightened ugliness, like his own lamentable New York." Naturally, then, what Mrs. Wharton saw in the Great War was its threat to her cherished land. Even the raising of relief funds by amusement benefits was so disgusting to her because it meant "keeping up a continuous picnic with ghoulish glee on the ruins of civilization." Ruins, she explains bitterly, because all civilization was bound up in France and her destruction would ruin the world. When finally "America tore the gag of neutrality from her lips and with all the strength of her liberated lungs claimed her right to a place in the struggle", then the flat-faced professors with lank hair, negligible ladies and other pacifists crept into their holes. Meanwhile this culpable country had been rebuked and redeemed by the heroic young volunteers who threw their splendid lives in the teeth of that "nation of savages who ought to be hunted off the face of the globe like vermin", those Germans who were "not fit to live with white people"; and died like exultant crusaders. Though the novelist's own generous and enterprising war record no doubt gave her some right to strong language, all these intemperate mouthings now have the familiar but dated melodramatic ring of the actual war period and its wild hysteria.

This example of prejudice in the guise of principle is merely another witness to the inextricable tangle of human emotions and ideas. Especially in the case of an intellectual such as Mrs. Wharton are we likely to find mind functioning more spontaneously than heart. Exposition and analysis gush forth over her pages at the slightest turn of the faucet, whereas feelings enter with more effort. Perhaps it is that the opinions are her own while the feelings mostly belong to other people that her depicted emotions have often the coolness of mental processes and the ideas have the warmth of sentiment. In any event, her beliefs frequently have the emphatic insistence of melodrama. No comment could be wider of the mark than that "As a cosmic thinker she renounces all standards and viewpoints." On the contrary, while there is nothing cosmic in her thinking, she is as full of standards and viewpoints as she can stick.

When these are disapproving they are vented with the pungent aid of satire, a condiment that permeates her entire work with caustic tang. "Mrs. Wharton has a healthy and robust mean

streak," observes a reviewer in a recent issue of *The New Yorker*; "She is rather a cat." Just so, and her felinity is shown by her haughty reserve and self-sufficiency, by her faculty for being easily and often displeased, and by her habit of saying it with scratches. The dainty claws sink in gently, noiselessly, almost like a caress, but the blood is drawn just as remorselessly as though with sound and fury. Nor is it so strange as another critic thinks that "one of such astringent mood and lancing intelligence should be so deficient in comedy." There are really quite a few flashes of pure fun, but on the whole this sharp lady is a feminine Pope or Byron or a metropolitan Jane Austen, belonging to the order of wits who have no genuine sense of humor.

When the artist's convictions are depressing they tend to formulate themselves into tragedy: when his reactions are happy they precipitate beauty. A sense of humor, a sense of tragedy, a sense of beauty, all these depend on a sense of proportion, the wide perspective that blends into one the wincing hurt, the gasp of dismay, the *aché* for loveliness, and the wry compassionate smile. Seldom if ever do we get these things from Edith Wharton. She meditates a good deal over this and that: the evils of divorce, the aftermaths of deception, the individual versus society, the need and the danger of joy, the gulf between ambition and ability; and she hatches a whole brood of concrete problems to serve for her themes and theses. But they turn out rather inconclusive. Her run-away wives, for instance, either come timidly back or accept a bribe to keep themselves scarce. Not one of them gets the five-pound look. *The Children* exhibits the muddled families that come from many marriages but the charm of the story lies in the glomerate hilarity of the Step, Half, and Whole Wheatens. Kate Clephane in *The Mother's Recompense* was a poor excuse of a mother and she had no recompense, except the satisfaction of a futile renunciation and a gratuitous martyrdom. She might have justified her hitherto useless and expensive existence by marrying staunch Fred Landers and salvaging something for the two of them, but she preferred to plume herself on the vague virtue of expiation. This tale is Mrs. Wharton's most sentimental, and *The Custom of the Country* the most sensational. The strange case of Miss Undine Spragg with her tractor career is as riotous melodrama as the doings of Deadwood Dick but it sounds the thus-far-and-no-farther warning to pampered and greedy American women.



Of romantic comedy this voluminous writer furnishes only one instance, in *Glimpses of the Moon*, and of complete tragedy none at all. One title, *The Tragic Muse*, brings in the phrase but not the whelming catastrophe. It is *Ethan Frome* that has the reputation of being the most perfect tragedy in our literature, but even that poignant story of frustration and cruel defeat lacks the gallant hopeless struggle and the total irrevocable loss that lift the tragic above the acquiescent level of pathos. Yet the Wharton characters are not wholly puppets of a capricious destiny, not being fashioned by an avowed ironist or determinist. The moral failures are offset reasonably enough by the successes. The American volunteers, Troy Belknap and George Campion, are sincere in their idealism; the Mornways place honor above reputation; Ned Halidon and Ned Stanwell, Delia Ralston and Lizzie Hazeldean, are capable of the hardest kind of sacrifice—that which by its very concealment puts one under the cloud of misinterpretation; Newland Archer shows that when one makes the best of a bad bargain instead of sulking or storming, the best may turn out to be pretty good.

Nor is it an artistic flaw to stop short of an ultimate coherent Weltanschauung while pushing details to extremes, since novelists need not be philosophers, but it does indicate an interest in the sensational for its own sake. And if Edith Wharton's specific sagacities are not welded into profound wisdom, any such deficiency is no more than the natural limitations that define a strong personality. A specialist is bound to be restricted. It is merely that the restricted areas of this writer are more conspicuous by belonging to a less generally familiar realm. Fewer writers as well as fewer readers know the upper crust of life better than the lower. And since our conclusions are of necessity conditioned by experience, none of us can escape our allotted boundaries. It is not the fault of this aristocrat—nor scarcely her misfortune—that she has viewed the human parade from drawing-room windows opening on New York or Parisian boulevards instead of gazing down on tenement clotheslines or looking out on village provincials or the emptiness that stretches away from prairie shacks. To pass in one's lifetime from carriage and coachman to limousine and chauffeur and never see the inside of a trolley or subway, to dine de luxe and never eat at a cafeteria, to have a box at the Metropolitan and never go to a movie, to associate with the refined and

not even know that bums and hoboes exist, all this is crass ignorance, but—O what price knowledge! Besides, there are plenty of Manhattan Transfers and Street Scenes and American Tragedies to keep us duly informed about gutters and prison cells.

Mrs. Wharton's manner, of course, harmonizes beautifully with her matter. It is as objective and detached yet as acutely conscious of its calculated and cunningly wrought effects. Whether the story is told in the third person or in the first of an invented speaker, it has firm structure and high polish,—qualities that are at least a relief after a good dose of the grotesque sprawlings and sloppy irrelevancies of the modern mode.

In his *Discordant Encounters* Edmund Wilson has Paul Rosenfeld call Elinor Wylie the Edith Wharton of our poets, explaining that "Her pride, her submerged passion, and her museum showcase culture are all characteristically American; her images of glass and bronze and gold and grained flint and crystal lenses have the hardness and exactitude and glitter of the world in which she has lived." This description of one E. W. does fit the other like a number six glove. The novelist's glitter comes largely from her epigrams, aphorisms and metaphors, a garniture profusely laid on with both comic and serious effects. Many of these have only ordinary gleam and luster but ever and anon they strike with dazzling force.

Culwin, for instance, looked like a phosphorescent log, with a red blink of eyes in a face of mottled bark. Neave's taste was like those little glittering lizards that die if not fed on some rare tropical fly. From John Clephane emanated a thick atmosphere of complacency like coal-gas from a leaking furnace. Miss Corby's role was jocular; she always entered the conversation with a handspring. Mrs. Amyot's platform volubility was like a conjuror's trick of pullings hundreds of yards of paper out of her mouth; as time went on, the stream of her eloquence ran like a leak that could be stopped only by the plumber; she was like a music-box charged with popular airs, the cylinders scraping and wheezing between the breathless turns. In another musical simile the Starkfield band-players, to keep up with the dancers, belabored their instruments like jockeys lashing their mounts on the home stretch. Mrs. Mingott's immense accretion of flesh descended upon her like a flood of lava on a doomed city. Lily Bart realized she was in a shaky vehicle, dashed by unbroken steeds

over a bumping road while she cowered within, aware that the harness wanted mending and wondering what would give way first.

Dynamic as she is in style, however, Mrs. Wharton is static in substance. In nearly four decades of production the only evidence of change is in externals. Her earlier characters rang for cabs and turned lights up and down instead of on and off. Her later actors ride in taxis and press buttons, though even in the *Hudson River Bracketed* of 1930 ladies wear tea-gowns of an afternoon and start the alcohol burner under the tea-kettle. This last novel of hers spins nearly six hundred pages about the most egregious ass that ever kept out of the Home for Feeble Minded, yet she seems to think he is something of a genius. Her very latest volume, like her first, is a collection of short stories, and its menu offers very much the same succession of courses,—a subtle futility, a dismal crime, a pathetic illusion, a chivalric romance, a mistaken-identity farce, and a baleful ghost. They confirm the impression that she will continue to write with a pearl-handled gold pen to the end of her days.

And her final fictional word is a case of worse and more of it. It seems that Mrs. Wharton submitted a novelette for the competition sponsored by Scribner's,—her publishers for nearly three decades. While her story did not take the prize (surely a blow in itself to the Dean of American Novelists), it was published, as an also ran of honorable mention, in the February issue of the magazine. The deftly etched portraits, the expertly finished background and atmosphere of *Her Son*, are reared upon a complicated and sensational plot the more conspicuous at a time when plot itself has the quaint effect of the obsolescent.

Back in the 'Nineties a very Victorian young woman falls in love with an entirely respectable gentleman, unhappily married. Their illegitimate son is adopted so promptly by a wealthy couple named Brown that its existence is unknown to all who might be concerned and its welfare is assured. Presently the first Mrs. Glenn obligingly dies, leaving the lovers free to marry and have a legitimate son, ostensibly their first and only. All is well until this sole treasure perishes in the Great War, a calamity later followed by the death of Mr. Glenn. Thereupon the doubly bereaved woman starts on a Quixotic search for her other son, absolutely lost for the twenty-seven years of his life, except for the slight clue of having been taken abroad. After zealously combing Europe for four months,

the eager seeker is rewarded by an accidental encounter with the Browns and their adopted son. The ecstasy of reunion is mitigated only by the discovery that the Browns are vulgar bounders whose money has mysteriously vanished, and that Steevie is in frail health. Accordingly Mrs. Glenn's fortune comes in handy, although the unstinted devotion of two mothers proves an embarrassment of emotional riches. And since the child cannot be cleaved in two, the mothers must be joined, smothering their innate antipathy under a rather ostentatious harmony. After Steevie's death, preceded by an unaccountable and heart-breaking revolt from his real mother, Mrs. Glenn stays on with the Browns and allows them to bleed her white financially. Finally, however, Chrissy Brown, goaded by Kit Glenn's assertion that she really has nothing more to give them, unleashes her vindictive fury and launches her deadly bolt of truth: namely, that Steevie never was a Glenn at all, that the whole tale was a hoax palmed off with mercenary intent on an easy credulity, and that she had been Steevie's mistress instead of his pseudo mother. The victim, however, was spared the force of this cruel blow by a merciful clouding of her wits at the tragic moment, rendering her impervious to the import of the horrible outburst, and allowing her to die in the bliss of ignorance.

Edith Wharton may have merited the Nobel Prize, as some have thought, or she may not, as the Committee evidently opined, but in either case it is not by her melodrama that she is condemned. Quite the reverse, it is by it that she is saved. For her decorous dime novels, as jazzy as Marie Corelli's and as pious as E. P. Roe's, do supply the universal and constant human craving for the vivid and vibrant, for suspense and excitement, for intimate relationships, intricate happenings, for sentiment and romance, for acid wit and skillful sermonizing. We may live without poetry, music and art, and all the rest of it, but rare is the man who can live without thrills. More power to those who can and will furnish them, especially to ladies and gentlemen of such refinement that they relish a chance to have the game without the name.



by Don Cameron Allen

## AUTUMN, 1520

Among the broken lily stalks  
La Belle Farnese, the lovely, walks  
And on her head the Sun's last rays  
Illumine the strands where beauty stays  
And twisted moonlight nestles there  
Like some calm nun who kneels to prayer.  
Her hands move o'er her silken dress  
In all their tired loveliness  
As vagrant stars that skim the sea  
To win the dawn's eternity.  
She turns her eyes where poplars blow  
And looks upon the bay below  
Where bustling through a grove of sails  
Tall foreigners are pitching bales  
From quay to hold and hold to quay  
Ivory from the grass-lands, pearls from the sea.

Then in the place where cypress grows,  
La Belle Farnese, the lovely, goes,  
There softly falls the evening's spell,  
Dancing in the twilight to the vesper bell.  
The wind strides through the leafy throng,  
The cypress chants its swaggering song,  
And the little jewelled birds fly high  
To scan the sea within the sky.  
Far on a vine hangs a fading flower,  
Dying as the bells tell the worship hour.

But still the lovely lady walks  
Among the drying hollyhocks  
That sigh upon the graying air . . .  
*The Spring forgets that we were fair*  
And the cool of fountains cry . . .  
*Comes now the Fall, a time to die.*

Serene of brow and calm of face  
La Belle Farnese glides on apace;  
Through the bleak box and the chinaberry,  
Past the slim birch and the ruddy cherry,  
Between dead pools enthralled to sedges  
And fennel reeds that crowd their edges;  
To come to where tall figures glow,  
Watching the twilight as the faint winds blow.

Then in this place aloof, afar,  
Her tears fall, burning like a star  
And tired grasses at her feet  
Grow strong again; her tears are sweet.  
The rising moon, that leperous sun,  
Sees Magdalene and Virgin weep in one.  
But silver leaves cry in despair . . .  
*The Spring forgets that we were fair*  
But say the stones that buried lie . . .  
*Comes now the Fall, a time to die.*

Behold the lady's eyes are bright;  
The moon has washed the stains of night . . .  
The vaulted trees are colonnades,  
The sods are carpeted brocades,  
The bushes are Byzantium grills,  
The stars are candles on the hills.  
She sees before her Borgia stand;  
His royal signet on his hand  
Glitters with amethystine fire;  
His eyes are clouds, his lips desire.  
Three crowns of gold, the papal rod  
Proclaim the temporal priest of God.  
Caesar the Borgia in purple comes,  
To the clash of arms and the beat of drums;  
His shirt's of gold, his buckle's jade;  
He fingers his Toledo blade.  
Giovanni rides a milk-white steed  
And loves strange women and alien mead;  
His cloak is white, his cheek is fair,

His voice is the voice of one in prayer.  
And last Lucretia, white of breast  
Glides like a shade among the rest,  
And like a gilded royal pawn,  
Captures, and checks, and then moves on.

La Belle Farnese, though the moon has passed  
And dancing dawn comes on at last,  
Stands with the figures of the dead  
As the star-frost fades on her golden head.  
The birds are stirring within the nest;  
The matin bells extol the blest;  
And dying leaves, a painted host,  
Falling in the morning like a barbarous ghost.

With tired eyes and tear-stained face,  
La Belle Farnese moves on apace.  
In among the dying grasses  
Colored like Venetian glasses,  
Scattering the dead rose petals,  
Careless of the stinging nettles.  
And all things dying murmur there . . .  
*The Spring forgets that we were fair*  
Chorus the clouds that race on high . . .  
*Comes now the Fall, a time to die.*

Treading on moss and crumbling ferns,  
La Belle Farnese, the fair, returns,  
Tearing with fingers, white and small,  
The heavy fringe of her India shawl.  
Rodrigo's eyes are haggard with clay  
And Julius holds the papal sway;  
Not all the masses in the land  
Can force another grave command.  
Caesar the Borgia sleeps in Spain,  
Scattered by storms across the plain  
Nor can the flourish of a lance  
Restore again that war-like glance.  
The cloak of white Giovanni wore.  
Is crimsoned by a faithless whore;

So let them sight in promised bliss  
His lips will never form a kiss.  
And fair Lucretia lies alone,  
Dreaming a high, unconquered throne,  
But like a pawn of yesterday  
She falls forgotten in the play.

Among the broken lily stalks,  
La Belle Farnese, the lovely, walks.  
The sun weeps on her golden hair . . .  
*The Spring forgets that we were fair*  
And from her heart sobs the reply . . .  
*Comes now the Fall, a time to die.*

*by Alice Freda Braunlich*

## FOR WASTED GRANARIES

For wasted granaries I shall not weep.  
Rhodesian plain where cameleopards run;  
Viewed from high parapets of Carcassonne,  
The Aude in pillowy verdure drowsing; leap  
Of wildest water down the foamy steep  
At Gavarnie; a mellow moonlight on  
The mirrored Taj Mahal;—my wealth is gone,  
Lavished for these, but better gold I keep.

At prairie dawn I plow my fields again,  
While over pliant grass the wind is blowing;  
And I am glad I sailed the Seven Seas.  
For I knew not how sweetly a wild grain  
Receives the dawn till once Aurora glowing  
Crimsoned for me the marble Cyclades.



*by Cyril Clemens*

## JOHN DRINKWATER

### THE POET OF HIGHGATE

**I**N the Highlands, on the outskirts of London, but a few doors from a house once inhabited by Coleridge, lives John Drinkwater, who cordially welcomed me one autumn afternoon. The poet is a stalwart Englishman, some six feet tall and correspondingly broad, and the possessor of fine, penetrating, gray eyes, heavy black hair, and a complexion inclined to be ruddy.

The poet led the way into his study, a glorious room where a log fire was brightly burning at one end, and, opposite, was an enormous window commanding a view of a flower garden of surpassing charm. A table littered with manuscripts stood before the fire, at which the poet had evidently been working recently. Around about were countless books, and various gifts from many famous men and women. The long high mantelpiece was decorated with an unusually striking bust of Walter de la Mare. After we had seated ourselves before the fire (for the autumn day was somewhat chilly) the poet remarked, motioning towards his manuscript,

"I am just putting the finishing touches on my biography of Samuel Pepys, which I have been working on all summer at Pepys' House, Brampton, near Huntingdon. This house, where Pepys was born in 1633, I bought several years ago."

I asked Drinkwater what part of the diarist's life he had concentrated upon.

"My biography deals with his whole career", the poet answered, "My feeling is that his entire career has never been adequately treated before. The diary, as you know, covers only nine years, from 1660 to 1669. I deal at considerable length with his early years. I believe with Bernard Shaw that the childhood and youth of an individual comprise perhaps, his most important period. It was a great inspiration for me working in the house where Pepys had actually lived. I felt always in the right mood for writing the biography. At times I could even imagine that he was standing by my side watching me write."

"What do you think of those modern authors who try to write in the style and manner of Pepys?" I asked.

"They have managed to imitate the old fellow's words and phraseology pretty neatly," he replied, "but they simply cannot catch his spirit which is the chief thing in Pepys, and the sole reason for his great popularity. Consequently I find all Pepys' modern imitators stale and flat. Why read a pale and insipid disciple, when the hale and hearty master waits in your library?"

After a discussion of Pepys for a few minutes more, the conversation turned upon hobbies.

"I have two hobbies", commented Drinkwater, lighting a cigarette, "collecting Confederate stamps and medals. I have had these two hobbies almost as far back as I can remember. Just the other day my stamp collection won a gold medal at the International Exhibition in Antwerp, and it is now being exhibited in Berlin."

Drinkwater showed me some of his very interesting stamps of the Confederacy and continued,

"Do you know, it is a peculiar thing, but collecting these stamps first aroused my interest in the history of the United States. Before that the history of your country meant little or nothing to me. In the early twenties and thirties of last century they had a sort of mail service along the Mississippi, and throughout several of the Southern states. Some stamps were issued locally, just as so many bank bills were at that period, and it is these local issues that have become especially scarce, and of late years exceedingly so, due to the manipulations of stamp dealers. The service and arrangement of some of these mail routes were similar to the Pony Express of a later date."

After stirring the fire for a moment or two Drinkwater went on,

"Naturally, my interest did not end with the stamps. I became interested in the Western settlement of America, and then in that mighty conflict of tendencies that resulted in the Civil War. It was not unnatural that my interest should especially be attracted to the most outstanding characters of that period, Robert E. Lee and Abraham Lincoln—hence my two plays dealing with these men. But if it hadn't been for my interest in postage stamps I almost certainly never would have written *Abraham Lincoln* and *Robert E. Lee*."

While Drinkwater was being summoned to the telephone my

attention was attracted by a rather unusual pen and ink drawing of Napoloen that was hanging on the wall. And on a small table near by, stood a bust of the emperor. When my host returned, I asked him about the drawing.

"Oh, that is the artist's original drawing for the jacket cover of Hardy's *The Dynasts*. I am a good friend of the man who first illustrated the famous poem."

In the course of our conversation the poet told me that he had no "especial regard" for Bonaparte, but, considering the drawing and the bust, one cannot help feeling that the great Napoleon is numbered among his heroes. I would not be at all surprised if some day Napoleon appeared upon the boards in the same brilliant way that Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee have done. At this point we adjourned to a sort of breakfast room exceedingly prettily furnished for tea. Like the study this apartment commanded a captivating view of the garden. A delicious tea was spread out for us on a little table, consisting of sandwiches, seed cake, and some toothsome apple tarts, not to mention fine buttered toast. In one corner of the room there was a revolving bookcase of miscellaneous volumes, and opposite to where I sat stood a fair sized bookcase containing all the books that Mr. Drinkwater had written. A shelf or two hardly held his various volumes of poems, such as *Swords and Ploughshares*, *Olton*, *Tides*, *Loyalties* and so forth. Another shelf had his plays, among them being *Abraham Lincoln*, *Mary Stuart*, *Oliver Cromwell*, and lower down were the shelves holding his various biographies.

I asked the poet what was his favorite of his own books. He smiled a moment and then replied,

"I have no favorite among my own children. But if any at all it is usually the last book I have written. Now it is my life of Pepys. Next year it will probably be some new work that I will have finished by then."

Other authors, notably G. K. Chesterton and Fannie Hurst, have told me that their last book is the one that they hate the most. It has cost them so much drudgery and eyestrain that they never want to see it again, much less read it. The conversation then shifted to early recollections. To the question how far back he could remember, Drinkwater answered,

"I don't remember as far back as some writers do, certainly not as far back as Penelope Anne's age, for instance." Penelope

Anne was the poet's little one year old girl who had just been brought into the room by the nurse.

After a while the subject of America came up for discussion, as it always does when Americans and English talk together.

"I have made two visits to the United States," said Drinkwater with a smile of pleasant recollection, "and admire its energy and its knack of always getting the thing accomplished that it sets out to do. In the things of the spirit you are also well advanced. I have a great admiration for your literary men, such as E. A. Robinson, Edgar Lee Masters, and Carl Sandburg."

Drinkwater told how from his earliest years Mark Twain had been one of his favorite authors, and that the days he devoted to his first perusal of *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckle-Berry Finn* were red letter days of his boyhood. At my request he gladly sent the following message to his fellow members in the United States.

"I like that word, 'let us now praise famous men', and am proud to belong to a Society that in praise remembers a man so justly famous. And Mark Twain, I think, was the sort of man who would like to be praised in this way by after years. —All good wishes to the Mark Twain Sociey.

Highgate.

September 22.

JOHN DRINKWATER."

As I bade goodbye to the poet I thought of the poem of his called "Passage" that advises us in reading history to

"Remember then that also we,  
In a moon's course are history."



by Arthur E. Du Bois

## HUMANISM AND FOLLY

Those who are most out of their wits we call "madmen", while we term those who are less far gone "stupid" or "idiotic" or, if we prefer gentler language, describe them as "romantic" or simple-minded", or again, as "innocent" or "inexperienced" or "foolish."

—Plato, Alcibiades.

ERASMUS' *Praise of Folly* is the *a quo, ad quem*, and *ne plus ultra* of old or new humanism. It contains no universal specific for making man what he is not, has never been, and may never be. It takes man into no fool's paradise—no Utopia or Bensalem, no unearthly realm of pure idea, and no hermit's hut from out of which sunshine and lovers are shut. It says what may be said by man for man—its focus is not upon God or the devil, not upon an hypothetical super-man, and not upon a mathematical-biological evolutionist, behaviorist, or disintegrationist. It calls man a fool. But it praises folly! Men may be beasts; if they are, they are worse fools. They may think themselves angels or gods; if they do, they are mad, and madness is an extreme of folly. Fully aware of what he was doing and of how he was doing it, in this way Erasmus pressed "humanism" to the point of irony at which it must end.

For humanism, by its very name and nature, has never been more or less than an ideal of a full and complete life for man on earth. It is not a religion and it is not a philosophy, although humanistic religions and philosophies are conceivable, as in Plato or a few forms of Christianity. Insofar as it can be defined, humanism is the creed of common-sense, of nothing-too-much: it is a code of action rather than a philosophy. It begins in what may be called a love of man, and such a love involves liking man's passions, senses, reason, instincts, as parts of him. But its aim is not to accept man as a naturalist in the Zola-esque sense might accept him, but only to take him at his best, when all his human faculties work together in him most efficiently. Its aim is a Sophocles. Even the philosopher, according to well known classic or humanistic ideals, like the poet, is to lead a life of action before he assumes a life of contemplation. More's Utopians are therefore given a life of the senses, passions, and reason, of action and con-

templation. Plato's Republicans know likewise that passion and reason together are the best defenders of the soul and that man is happiest when the three faculties of the soul function together. The aim of Lucian's philosopher is practising and "legislating for the perfect life, holding out hands of help to those that would reach it, commending all that is fairest and best, fairest and best". Classicists and neo-classicists alike tended to exalt even the ordinary man above the philosopher. And the practising humanist always felt that excessive passionate-ness, sensuous-ness, or rational-ism was bound to prevent that perfect harmony between human faculties which was to constitute, if not happiness, at least the best means to it.

Because the cultivation of man was the reason for his being, then, the humanist had to be content with what faculties were allotted to man—sensing, feeling, reasoning; and because he was a humanist, he also distrusted any excessive cultivation of one of these faculties. In short, he had to rely upon common-sense, and therefore be led into double-entendres and ironic disquisitions on madness or folly inevitable. For common-sense is called into play only when one is confronted by opposites apparently equally good or bad; and the humanist, in accepting neither of the opposites, was forced into the difficult position of half-approving both. The humanist today, for example, will be unwilling to forego his daily bath; yet he will not feel that any man is making the fullest use of himself if he devotes himself exclusively to bathtubs!

This, then, is the crux of humanism, fully represented in the *Praise of Folly*. The humanist begins with a love of man, and such love involves passion, sensing, reasoning. His aim is a perfect union of the three faculties to bring into being an all-round man. He accepts therefore all that may be said in dispraise of feeling, sensing, or reasoning in excess. And in so doing, he deprives himself of any means of praising one or the other of them as good in, of, and for itself. His code is that of nothing-too-much: he must apply common-sense to problems; in particular, as a humanist he must use his human faculties common-sensibly. Philosophically he will be betrayed thereby into all sorts of paradoxes, for he will distrust any product exclusively of one of the human faculties. But humanism is not a philosophy. And the humanist may be consistent with himself in almost self-conscious irony if he happens to be an Erasmus.

If he happens to be an Erasmus! Even in early Renaissance England there was only one *Praise of Folly*. And since then there has been only an occasional *Twelfth Night*; or *What You will*, notable for its praise of folly. For others than Erasmus were apt to be concerned with means rather than with the end, and therefore to give themselves wholly up to a cultivation of courtesy ultimately to produce Chesterfieldian gentlemen or to a study of, say, Greek or Biblical literature ultimately to produce Bentleyan scholars. Along the way, these praise-worthy fools scattered foolish men of pieces like fops and pedants instead of useful men of parts who were the ideal of Erasmus, scorner of the Sophister,

a Greek, a latinist, a mathematician, a philosopher, a musician, and all to the utmost perfection; who, after threescore years' experience in the world. . . spent the last twenty of them only in drudging to conquer the criticisms of grammar. . . .

## II

In the *Praise of Folly*, Erasmus strove to find a mean between pagan hedonism and Christian-pagan Stoicism and between Stoic optimism and Christian pessimism. His proper study was man. And inasmuch as he leaned heavily upon classical (particularly those of Plato, Lucian, and Seneca) and mediaeval notions of psychology, it was inevitable that such an attempt should result in an ironic disquisition on folly. One may be confident that the Christian called the Stoic a fool, the Stoic called the hedonist a fool, and and the hedonist called the Christian a fool. But the matter went deeper than that. For in discussing the human faculties, idealists like Plato, realists like Lucian, Christians like Barclay, Stoics like Seneca agreed that there was an intimate connection between, on the one hand, madness and folly and ignorance and crime and, on the other hand, passion and reasoning and sensing.

Two great causes of crime were deemed to be madness and ignorance. Madness might be caused by disease, often explained by the doctrine of humours or passions. More often it was the result of giving way to an excess of passion, uncontrolled passion being the motivation of the madnesses of Hercules, Orestes, Ajax, Orlando, Tristan, and others; uncontrolled passion likewise calling forth worried observations upon madness from Swift, Johnson,

and others. A person who was mad was a person out of his senses or out of his head or mind (reason). The passions therefore were considered to be the ultimate sources of madness, of mis-sensing or mis-reasoning, a chief cause of crime. And folly was a mild form of madness.

In addition to being a source of madness and therefore a cause of crime, with sensing passion was distrusted as being unreliable, worldly, and limited in scope. Things are not what they seem; the report of things made by the senses and the passions, the human faculties by which one establishes a direct contact or a relationship between one's self and the specific, is therefore misleading to body or soul. By their very natures, these faculties confine one to the world of externalities and furnish one with no knowledge of ultimate causes and effects, absolute relationships, universalities. Not only are they impotent in themselves to transport one beyond the immediate and the specific; they also distract the reason from paying its proper attention to the universal. Only the true philosopher will be free from the tyranny of the senses and the passions; in consequence, he will be deemed foolish, but only by the worldly wise, because he will often seem unaware of what is going on in the world about him. In short, to rely upon the senses or the passions exclusively is again to be foolish or mad. It is to be without reason.

In addition to madness, ignorance was considered a chief cause of crime. As Plato, Erasmus, and others agreed, there are at least two kinds of ignorance. The first is the ignorance of the child, of the aged, of the untutored. It is foolish as the child, the old man in second childhood, or the simple fellow is foolish. It is unreason, want of knowledge and of the self-control which it gives. It leaves a person open therefore to a tyranny of the passions, its effects being most clearly evident in the peevish vexations of the old man. It is to be combatted by culture and education, and significantly Plato warns friends of families not to pamper the passions of children while their fathers try to teach them self-control.

The second kind of ignorance is also foolish, and more vicious than the first because it is strengthened by knowledge or even by reason. Whereas the first is but want of knowledge or self-control which may even be humored on occasion and which is not self-sought, the second is wilful, a want of *right* knowledge. A person ignorant in this way is doubly vicious, for he is able to per-



ceive what is good and yet to prefer something else to it and to justify his preferences by rationalizations: he therefore discountenances the true good *and* establishes a false good in its place. In contrast to him, who may be worldly-wise, the fool is utterly wise and becomes the prophet in classic folk-lore tradition even as it is preserved by Yeats or Masfield. To this type of ignoramus belong pedants, politicians, patriots, fops, and others who make a passion of their reason until it becomes un-reason. They are mad too.

Until the "romanticists" attempted to justify passion as good in of, and for itself as a portion of man's inherently good nature, then, passion was thought to make fools out of men, associated as it was with ignorance and madness. In even this association, however, there were forward-looking contrasts which Erasmus sharpened to the point of irony and which others considered carefully. The fool may not be worldly-wise, for example, but in his unworldliness he often has visions not given to the worldly-wise. Similarly, the philosopher may seem foolish when he does not notice what is going on about him; but in contrast to those who know only what is going on about them, he is wise beyond words. Noticing this phenomenon, particularly in studying genius, Aristotle and Plato and a long line of followers found it necessary to distinguish madness from mad. And they discovered that certain kinds of madness seem divine in operation, however unaccountable they may be to reason. Like Swift, however, they still feared madness; and they distrusted passion because of its intimacy with madness and ignorance. For whatever reason, whether because of original sin or because of a jovial tyranny over a Prometheus, everyone was found to be passionate—Stoics and Christians agreed that the world was full of fools, and in consequence Brant and Barclay had no trouble in filling their *Ship*.

Not everyone believed in a heaven in which fools might be redeemed of their foolishness. And many who did were not quite convinced that man was as beastly because of his passions as he was painted. Somehow man ought to be able to redeem himself. The Stoics thought that by pure reason he might utterly dispel passion—Seneca literally allowed a wise man no passion at all. But few were willing to undergo Stoic discipline; the preachings and practices of professing Stoics were discovered often to be incon-

sistent; and, anyway, man's reason was fallible; it was likely to become a passion with him, exalting him even above God or gods or reducing him to the inhumanity of a wooden stick. The addition of instincts to the catalogue of human faculties but complicated matters, for they would turn out to be nothing but self-love, center of all passion. And with reason reduced to passion, passion to self-love, pessimists found it harder than ever to praise man. LaRochefoucauld's maxims did not lessen their disgust at man's excessive pride and selfishness. Hobbes and Mandeville resorted either to sheer rigorism or else to sheer anti-rationalistic utilitarianism. The world was still peopled only by fools.

Others were more optimistic. The Platonists added to the human faculties intuition, a divine sense, a moral sense, a reasonable voice of the soul, a memory filled with divine recollections. To do so, however, was to evade the problem—passion remained reprehensible, ignorance unchecked and madness rampant even in a Republic from which poets were banished. To do so, moreover, was to change focus from the world of man to a world of pure idea. The deists, and even Spenser and Milton, evolved a kind of microcosmic chain of being in which sense and passion had a proper, but a subordinate, place under reason. Reason, however, always turned out to be either the proud discipline of the Stoics or else the moral conscientiousness of the Platonists, an end in itself, subject to the same objections which one might make to Stoicism or Platonism. And because such a chain of being was reasoned out by analogy to an hypothetical macrocosmic chain of being, moreover, again it tended to put emphasis, not upon man, but upon some cosmological scheme of things. Reaction was inevitable. And it is peculiarly interesting in Swift, Pope, Shaftesbury, and Johnson, all of whom helped to bring back attention to man.

Swift belonged fundamentally to the pessimistic group. But because he had no confidence in man's reason or his passion, he was ultimately an authoritarian, this Dean of St. Paul's. Man's reason, he felt instinctively, had distorted the original order of things even in the Church, and this original order of things was better than the new. Yet Swift was no true primitivist—he agreed thoroughly with LaRochefoucauld that man was essentially vain and selfish. In consequence of these contradictions, Swift could hate man and

love men, on occasion be led into ironic remarks on madness, yet never alter his opinion that because of his passions man was an inordinately proud and selfish beast. Against this view of man's passions, Pope reacted as strongly as he did against the Stoic's exaltation of reason. Though his method of reading the *Essay on Man* was woefully wrong, Warburton was therefore quite right in insisting that it was not really deistic. For though Pope stuck to the macrocosmic chain of being, his primary concern, as he hinted in his letters, was to set limits to the reason of the Stoics and to free the passions from the charge of being only selfish and so to liberate man from much pessimistic thinking. Pope set out to prove, therefore, that self-love and social are the same; and passages on pride in his poem have consequently an unusual significance. In recommending good-humor, Shaftesbury went much further than Pope, who had only said that self-love and social are the same and who had therefore taken only a half-position between, let us say, Mandeville and Shaftesbury. For in recommending good-humor, Shaftesbury more or less tacitly assumed an essentially good human nature with passion a part of it—good-humor and good-nature are not far removed, and good-humors can mean but good passions.

It is curious that for various reasons Johnson had a comparatively poor opinion of all these "optimists"—the Platonists, the deists and Milton and Spenser, Swift, Pope, and Shaftesbury. It is significant that as neo-classicist and as a Christian he distrusted passion in all of its manifestations, preferring reason to fancy or imagination; the novel, the beautiful, the universal, the cultivated to novelties, beauties, realities, and nature. He hated ignorance and feared madness. Yet he loved man, and when he came to deal with peculiar passions like sorrow or a love of fame, he found much to be said for them. He had no faith in Stoics, set limits to the powers of human reason, noting particularly its liability to being mixed up with passion. Dealing with specific problems he often resorted to common-sense rather than to reason or authority, for he distrusted systems. Yet he could not praise folly; could not get over the notion that, inasmuch as man was a fool, there was little to be said for him.

Perhaps because they were in a sense all neo-classicists—Swift, Pope, the deists, the Platonists, Shaftesbury, and Johnson were

all nearly humanistic. In Swift's irony, his love of men, his hatred of man; in Pope's rationalizations concerning the passions, his attempt to reconcile them with a scheme of things for man, his distrust of reason as a good in itself, his realization that by reason man may not much transcend himself, his reliance upon common-sense, steering between systems seemingly opposite; in the Platonist's cultivation of a special faculty admittedly human by which man was to save himself; in Shaftesbury's tolerance of man as he is; in Johnson's distrust of the idiosyncratic, his common-sense attitude toward specific human problems—in all these there was a humanistic point of view, strengthened perhaps by exchange of views either through inheritance or intercourse.

Yet none of these was only a humanist. It is very difficult to be only humanistic—not to be religious or philosophic. For man likes everything to be explained in an orderly fashion; if he could, he would arrange the stars geometrically. Had they not been Christians, Swift and Johnson might have been humanists, for they disliked what the humanist dislikes—foppery, idiosyncrasy, men of pieces—and they loved men, for whom they worked common-sensibly. Yet the good life they preached was not for man, but for God. Shaftesbury's tolerance went too far to suit a humanist; good-humor encourages humors, original geniuses, men of pieces rather than men of parts. Ultimately the deists, Platonists, and Pope most nearly approximated the humanist's point of view.

Pope professed to apply common-sense to the problems he discussed; and it afforded the only consistency there is to the *Essay on Man*. Parallels between it and the *Praise of Folly* are very striking. But Pope's work was chiefly negative, that of opposing Christian-Stoic and anti-rationalistic pessimism, steering between systems seemingly opposite. Involved as it is with deism, it never reaches the point of praising man for what he is or may be on earth, a praise-worthy foolish fellow, neither beast nor god. Instead, it is a hodge-podge system, naïvely constructed on a basis of common-sense, which is antagonistic to systems. And it is no wonder that the author of *Common-Sense a Common Delusion*, discussing the *Essay on Man*, pointed out that, nonsense or nonsense being naturally non-existent, what we call nonsense must really be common-sense—fustian, bombast, nonsense, madness, folly! The deists and Platonists, like the humanist, had an ideal of



an all-round man. In fact, the Platonists point the way which the humanists may be able to take constructively: for it may be that in achieving a perfectly harmonious working of all the human faculties together, man may attain new powers equivalent to a moral sense, a new power by which he may have glimpses of what has not yet been seen on land or sea. Unfortunately, mystics have been commonly sick, unwholesome persons rather than ideal men and women whom one could want to imitate. And in their interest in a cosmology, the Platonists with the deists, escaped from the human, the common-sensible point of view of Erasmus and the *Praise of Folly*, which is all the more striking by contrast.

### III

As a humanist, Erasmus aimed to cultivate men at their best on earth. Such an ideal meant that he must resort to common-sense because he was no more content with the average man than he was with man as a beast or with man as a little god. And resorting to common-sense, by the very nature of common-sense, meant that he must rest content between extremes.

In the first place, the humanistic ideal betrayed the humanist into two forms of naturalism. Accepting man for his own sake, as a sufficient *raison d'être* of the world, he was forced to observe man as he is. This observation but confirmed his distrust of man's senses, passions, and reason alike. Erasmus admitted that there was

put into the composition of our humanity more than a pound of passion to an ounce of reason; and reason. . . . confined within the narrow cells of the brain, whereas. . . the passions have the whole body to range in. . . let reason be never so importunate in urging and reinforcing her admonitions to virtue, yet the passions bear all before them, and by the least offer of curb or restraint grow but more imperious, till reason itself, for quietness sake, is forced to desist from all further remonstrance.

The passions were scarcely more dangerous than the reason. And Erasmus thought those very ridiculous who

though they are ignorant of the unknown cause of the least insect's life, . . . vaunt however, and brag that they know all things, when indeed they are unable to construe the mech-

anism of their own bodies: nay, when they are so purblind as not to be able to see a stone's cast before them, yet they shall be as sharp-sighted as possible in spying-out ideas, universals, separate forms, first matters, quiddities, formalities, and a hundred such like niceties, so diminutively small, that were not their eyes extremely magnifying, all the art of optics could never make them discernible.

In contrast to the wise man, the fool is wise and trustworthy—

Whatever the fool has in his heart he betrays it in his face: or what is more evident, discovers it by his words: while the wise man, as Euripides observes, carries a double tongue; the one to speak what may be said, the other what ought to be said; the one what truth, the other what the times require; whereby he can in a trice alter his judgment; as to prove that to be white now, which he had just before sworn to be black. . . .

And therefore,

As those. . . fall shortest of happiness that reach highest at wisdom, meeting with the greater repulse for soaring beyond the boundaries of their nature, and without remembering themselves to be but men, like the fallen angels, daring to vie with Omnipotence, and giant-like scale heaven with the engines of their own brain; so are those most exalted in the road of bliss that degenerate nearest to brutes, and quietly divest themselves of all use and exercise of reason.

If anything thus, the humanist would incline with the Utopian to an Epicurean point of view. But the humanist was not a hedonist, for which reason he generally substituted "happiness" for "pleasure" as being less absolutely sensual, more certain to incorporate all the human faculties in its enjoyment. Distrusting man's senses, passions, reason, Erasmus could scarcely help seeing man somewhat as Swift or Mandeville saw him, an animal or an insect:

It is indeed incredible to relate what mirth, what sport, what diversion, the groveling inhabitants here on earth give to the above-seated gods in heaven. . . . If (as Lucian imagines Menippus to have done heretofore,) any man could now again look down from the orb of the moon, he would see thick swarms as it were of flies and gnats, that were quarreling with each other, jostling, fighting, fluttering, skipping, playing—newly produced soon after decaying, and then immediately vanishing,—and it can scarce be imagined how many

tumults and tragedies so inconsiderate a creature as man doth give occasion to, and that, in so short a space as the small span of human life. . . .

And as a result of these observations, the humanist was forced to accept the condemnation of the passions as leading to madness, and the definition of the world as a Bedlam given by the Stoic.

But if man were now viciously bad—mad and ignorant—such badness might not be a sign of originally corrupt human nature, but perhaps only of culture, infection. As Lucian put it in *Nigrinus*:

A person who has been bitten by a mad dog not only goes mad himself, you know, but communicates his madness to any one whom he bites whilst he is in that state, so that the infection may be carried on by that means through a long succession of persons.

Ignorance is intimate with madness, and ignorance may be cured. In order to believe that a Sophocles could be sufficient as an end in living, the humanist had to assume a faith, if not in human good nature, at least in the perfectibility of human nature—hence, his faith in Greek culture, in courtesy, in right learning: he became a kind of primitivistic naturalist as well as a Zola-esque naturalist. And assuming a belief in the perfectibility of man, in man's essentially good nature, he assumed also the essential goodness of the senses, passions, and reason.

Everything became relative as a result of the conflict between these two very opposite forms of naturalism. The humanist professed learning; yet, as Sophocles had said,

*To know nothing is the sweetest life.*

For, for instance, being ignorant of consequences, one did not have to worry about them, and the ignorant man was the most worshipful, devout man. Self-love became a good; it jerked a man literally out of himself, kept him from falling into despair, made him active, ambitious, spurred his sluggish reason, and so on. The illusions of sense, a form of madness, were not without their good: Mrs More, for example, was as happy with her "Woolworth" jewels as she could have been if they had been "Tiffany's." The passions themselves, behind these illusions of sense, innocent self-love and ignorance, were good. In fact,

these [passions], however decried, are not only our tutors to instruct us toward the attainment of wisdom, but even embolden us likewise, and spur us on to a quicker dispatch of all our undertakings. This, I suppose, will be stomached by the stoical Seneca, who pretends that the only emblem of wisdom is the man without passion; whereas the supposing any person to be so, is perfectly to unman him, or else transform him into some fabulous deity that never was, nor ever will be; nay, to speak more plainly, it is but the making him a mere statue, immovable, senseless, and altogether inactive. And if this be their wise man, let them take him to themselves, and remove him into Plato's commonwealth, the new Atlantis, or some other like fairy land.

Sheer Shaftesburean good-humor was thought better than "a stiff, sour, dogged moroseness". Altogether, the passions were the spurs even to the noblest actions. Throwing away one's life for one's country may be foolish; but no one would do it were he not motivated by vainglory. in fact,

The invention of all arts and sciences are likewise owing to the same reason; for what sedentary, thoughtful men would have beat out their brains in the search of new and unheard of mysteries, if not urged on by the bubbling hopes of credit and reputation?

In short, looking over "the outside edge", the humanist discovered

it is certain that all things, like so many Janus's, carry a double face, or rather bear a false aspect, most things being really in themselves far different from what at first blush they appear to others: so that which at first seems alive is in truth dead; and that again, which appears as dead, at a nearer view proves alive; beautiful seems ugly, wealthy poor, scandalous is thought creditable; prosperous passes for unlucky; friendly for what is most opposite, and innocent for what is hurtful and pernicious. In short, if we turn the tables, all things are found placed in a different posture quite from what just before they appeared to stand in.

At this rate, the whole world became seriously mad again, even as the objectionable Stoics had described it: it was ruled by the passions—there were no absolutes—and the passions were incipient madness. Plato, Lucian, Seneca, Horace, and others in various manners recognized the fact as well as Stertinus and Chrysippus,



whom Erasmus cited. But according to the humanist, just as the passions were good and bad, so was madness or folly, their consequential outcome. One could praise folly. Even Plato distinguished between kinds of madness, and discovered that there were *divine* madnesses—prophetic, initiatory, poetic, and erotic. Following Plato, Erasmus noted:

indeed, there is a two-fold sort of madness; the one that which the furies bring from hell; those that are herewith possessed, are hurried to wars and contention, by an inexhaustible thirst of power and riches, inflamed to some infamous and unlawful lust, enraged to act the parricide, seduced to become guilty of incest, sacrilege, or some other of those crimson-dyed crimes; or finally, to be so pricked in conscience as to be lashed and stung with the whips and stings of grief and remorse. But there is another sort of madness that proceeds from Folly so far from being any way injurious or distasteful, that it is thoroughly good and desirable; and this happens when by a harmless mistake in judgment of things the mind is freed from those cares which would otherwise gratingly afflict it, and smoothed over with a content and satisfaction it could not under those circumstances so happily enjoy.

Everyone being foolish in degree, like the Republicans the Utopians were humanitarian toward idiots:

They have singular delite and pleasure in foles. And as it is a great reproche to do annye of them hurte or injury, so they prohibit not to take pleasure of follyshnes.

And all that one could finally say was with Plato, that excess alone resulted in "the wantonness of folly. . . that worst of diseases"—

In the first golden age of the world, there was no need of these perplexities; there was then no other sort of learning but what was collected from every man's common sense, improved by an easy experience.

Now man can but "jog on in the common road of nature, which will never mislead us, except we voluntarily leap over those boundaries which she has cautiously set to all finite beings"—

For who would not hate and avoid such a person as should be deaf to all the dictates of common sense? that should have no more power of love or pity than a block or stone that remains heedless of all dangers? that thinks he can never mis-

take, but can foresee all contingencies at the greatest distance, and make provision for the worst presages? that feeds upon himself and his own thoughts? that monopolizes health, wealth, power, dignity, and all to himself? that loves no man, nor is beloved of any? that has the impudence to tax even divine providence of ill contrivance, and proudly grudges, nay even tramples under foot all other men's reputation,

Follow nature! Be a man! Be common-sensible! This can lead but to paradoxes: Be foolish wisely, passionate rationally, natural artistically, mad sanely! But be thou thus mad or foolish. For the foolish are wise, and the mad are sane, and man is neither a god nor a beast, but both a god and a beast. The humanistic code of nothing-too-much for man can result ultimately in no other formula.

Fare ye well, therefore, clappe your hands in token of gladnesse, live carelesse, and drink all out, ye the trustie servants and solemne ministers of Folie.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This is not to say that the humanist believes in no absolute values. His concern for humanity and his consequent reliance upon common-sense yield him a set of absolute values, for example, to regulate conduct by; and Erasmus' delight in proverbial wisdom is significant. "Classicism" and "neo-classicism", nevertheless, are much larger words than "humanism", "pseudo-humanism", or "new humanism". And a good deal of the controversy in which new humanists have indulged, was the result of mistaking for humanism modes of thought in which humanism was only an incident—Platonism, for example, or Anglicanism. It should be noted that conditions out of which grew the humanism of Erasmus were radically different from those out of which the pseudo-humanism of Pope grew. I have perhaps over-intellectualized Erasmus once or twice because I was interested in him, not as a representative of the Renaissance, but as a representative of the humanist. Pope faced the systematized, potent materialism of Hobbes and of neo-Stoics. But Erasmus lived in a system-less age or at least in an age of decadent, impotent systems. Although he opposes Stoics to Epicureans, his Stoicism is consequently that of Seneca! The fundamental conflict in the *Praise of Folly*, moreover, as I have tried to show in III, is not so much between systems as between ways of regarding man, between the two kinds of naturalism—"bestly", "Adamite", or "Zola-esque" naturalism and "godly", "pre-Adamite", or "Rousseauistic" naturalism. I put Swift in the "optimistic" group with pseudo-humanists only because, though he was fundamentally pessimistic, in the *Tale of a Tub* and in *Gulliver's Travels* much of the irony is a result of this very conflict.

by *Waldo H. Dunn*

## WILSON'S CARLYLE

IN 1837 when Thomas Carlyle undertook an estimate of Lockhart's *Scott*, the seventh and last volume of that biography had not yet appeared. "The physiognomy of Scott will not be much altered for us by that seventh volume;—the prior six have altered it but little," wrote Carlyle; "and in the *mean* while," he continued, "study to think it nothing miraculous that seven biographical volumes are given where one had been better." A reviewer who turns to David Wilson's ambitiously planned biography of the Scottish sage finds himself constrained to reiterate Carlyle's own words. Thus far five of the six promised volumes have appeared.<sup>1</sup> For many reasons that sixth and last volume has been eagerly awaited. It now seems certain, however, that so far as Wilson is concerned the biography is finished. Recent word from Scotland brings the heavy tidings that his mind has failed to such an extent that he can do no further literary work.

It is possible, therefore, to attempt an estimate of the value of his performance. General readers and special students are wanting to know what place the *Wilson Carlyle* is to take among the many volumes which have been published since that February 5, 1881, when Carlyle died. I deeply regret the misfortune which has befallen Mr. Wilson and cut short a work which I have enjoyed in spite of the fact that I believe it to be mistaken in conception and misleading in tendency. Nothing that I write is directed against Mr. Wilson personally. I shall speak of him only in so far as may be necessary to explain his work as a biographer of Thomas Carlyle.

Before turning directly to the biography I shall say a word about the biographer. David Wilson, a native Scotsman, a graduate of the University of Glasgow, and a barrister, was born in 1864. From 1886 to 1911 he was in the Indian Civil Service in

<sup>1</sup>CARLYLE TILL MARRIAGE (1795-1826). By David Alec Wilson. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd. London. E. P. Dutton & Co. New York. 1923.

CARLYLE TO "THE FRENCH REVOLUTION" (1826-1837). Ibid. 1924.

CARLYLE ON CROMWELL AND OTHERS (1837-1848). Ibid. 1925.

CARLYLE AT HIS ZENITH (1848-1853). Ibid. 1927.

CARLYLE TO THREESCORE AND TEN (1853-1865). Ibid. 1929.

Burma. He early came under the influence of Carlyle's writings, and arrived at the conclusion that Carlyle was a sage after the order of Confucius. I think there is little doubt that Wilson began his study of Carlyle out of genuine admiration for the man, out of gratitude for that word of inspiration which thousands of young men of the 1870's and 1880's derived from his works. He soon drifted into the camp of Froude's opponents, however, formed conclusions, and closed his mind. He became a worshipper of Carlyle and a hater of Froude. He developed what I call a chronic case of Froudophobia.

In 1890 he began collecting for pleasure all the materials he could find bearing upon the life of Carlyle. Of his industry there can be no question. He says that by 1912 he had collected enough to fill fifty volumes, and since then he has been applying himself to the task of reducing it to what he calls "readable size". Without investigating Froude's side of the matter he has accepted wholesale the statements of Froude's enemies, and upon them founded his *Carlyle*. A work which has been in preparation for forty years should command attention, and I have tried to give it the study which it ostensibly deserves.

I have been charged with undue severity, even with injustice, in criticising Wilson's biographical labors. I wish to say now, therefore, once and for all, that I am not blind to the value of what he has done. He has produced a vast compendium of information about the period in which Carlyle lived. Almost every one who in any way touched Carlyle's orbit is given a niche. After the manner of Boswell, Wilson has attempted to exhibit a view of literature and literary men in Great Britain for more than a half-century. All this is legitimate and important and entertaining. It will be a long time before such another gathering of material about Carlyle and his contemporaries is made, and in the meantime this work may point general readers and special students to many out-of-the-way sources. George Saintsbury has referred to Wilson's volumes as a "very remarkable thesaurus, which, though far from faultless, will do future students much good, and can do none of them, if he has any brains of his own, much harm." Mr. Saintsbury makes the very admission I desire. Brains and very keen brains at that must cerebrate unceasingly if the true is to be separated from the false in these volumes.

The actual menace of Wilson's work lies in the fact that it is



propaganda. The author has set himself the task of discrediting James Anthony Froude as biographer of Carlyle, and frankly states that his purpose is to supersede Froude. The handling of all his material is motivated by this purpose. It is difficult for me to believe that Wilson has tried intentionally to deceive the public, yet it is almost equally difficult for me to believe that at some time he has not sensed the truth. I need not pursue this topic farther, as I have elsewhere dealt with it at length, and those who are interested may read for themselves. All that I have written about the controversy which arose out of Froude's work as literary executor and biographer of Carlyle cuts directly across the achievement of David Wilson. If I have failed to vindicate my position, Wilson's biography may fairly claim to supersede that of Froude. If I have succeeded, his work may still claim to be worthy of a place as an anthology of Carlyleana, but it can never be recognized as a truthful representation of Thomas Carlyle.

The special angle from which Wilson views and presents Carlyle is a mistaken angle, and in consequence the final impression left upon one who has got at the facts behind the matter is that of a portrait out of focus. It is Wilson's Carlyle that emerges from the work—we should not quarrel with that fact in itself—and Wilson's Carlyle is a Carlyle portrayed by one who has closed his eyes to fundamental facts, a Carlyle for the production of which the author has been willing to mould every fact to his own purposes, no matter how much violence the process required.

In short, Wilson has based his work on a number of assumptions. In the first place, he alleges that Froude was a solemn, dull, stupid, and unreliable Southron, "the dupe of a knave," that he was indeed totally unable to understand or to compass Carlyle. He leaves it somewhat doubtful, however, whether Geraldine Jewsbury or Frederick Martin is the knave. In the second place, he assumes that Mary and Alexander Carlyle, Charles Eliot Norton, and Sir James Crichton-Browne were individually and collectively right in the charges they brought against Froude. In the third place, he assumes that Frederick Martin and Geraldine Jewsbury invented the reports as to the domestic infelicities of the Carlyles, and in consequence pursues each of these unfortunate persons with all the malice he can summon.

With regard to Wilson's attitude toward Froude I need quote but two remarks. "The striking fact was that to the end Carlyle

punctiliously ignored as Froude's business and not his whatever Froude was to write." The actual fact is that Carlyle commissioned Froude to act as his literary executor and biographer. Froude "must have known," writes Wilson in the preface of the first volume, "he was doing wrong when he made free use of the love-letters. Carlyle had searched for them in vain in order to destroy them; and, failing to find them, left clear instructions which Froude received: My strict command now is, 'Burn them if ever found. Let no third party read them: let no printing of them, or any part of them, be ever thought of by those who love me!'" Unfortunately for Wilson he was not aware of the existence of a document which completely refutes his assertion. It may be said for him that he was writing on the authority of Alexander Carlyle, who in 1903 had published the following: "Amongst the papers which Miss Mary Aitken too confidently lent to Froude were the love-letters which passed between Carlyle and Miss Welsh before their marriage, and which would assuredly never have been seen by his or any other eye, had she noticed what Carlyle had written respecting them . . . And yet in defiance of this heart-felt, and, we may say, death-bed conjuration, Froude opened the packet, read all the letters, and published a selection of them in the *Early Life*. He never ventured to assert that there had been any verbal withdrawal of this most earnest command, and his conduct in ignoring it may be left to the judgment of right-minded men." It happens that Miss Margaret Froude, with wise foresight, retained the portion of manuscript which records Carlyle's injunction to burn. It is in the handwriting of Mary Carlyle, and it proves beyond any doubt that she knew what Carlyle had written about the love-letters. Nor is that all. There appears upon the manuscript a notation, also in her handwriting, to the effect that the letters in question were found December 1869. Why did Carlyle not have them burned?

Carlyle's injunction to burn was written either in 1866, before he went to Mentone, or in 1868, when he was again occupied with the preparation of his wife's papers. Miss Margaret Froude tells me that the bundle of which the letters of 1825 formed a part were sent to her father either with the rest of Mrs. Carlyle's letters in 1871, or with Mrs. Carlyle's correspondence in 1873. On the back of the letter of confession Carlyle had written "Don't copy." This injunction he later marked through, and left the whole matter of

decision to his biographer. Froude did not insert the letter. He gave a summary with brief quotations in the *Thomas Carlyle*, i.306. I give these instances as typical of Wilson's attitude towards Froude, his ignorance of the actual facts, and his unreliability in regard to the fundamentals of a biography of Carlyle. I must insist at this point upon the fact that no statements of Mary and Alexander Carlyle, Charles Eliot Norton, or Sir James Crichton-Browne can be believed without strongly corroborative evidence. It is sufficient to say that David Wilson accepts their assertions as gospel truth.

In view of the party with which Wilson aligns himself it is remarkable that he has seen fit to emulate the very methods which have been ascribed to Froude. Briefly Froude's methods, which are always referred to by his enemies as faults, are said to be these: (1) inaccuracy in quoting; (2) the employment of summaries and abridgements which misrepresent the originals; (3) the use of unreliable testimony; and (4) the failure to indicate omissions in documents. Inasmuch as Wilson frankly proclaims his desire to supersede Froude, he should certainly have taken pains to avoid what are alleged to be Froude's faults. I have gone very carefully into these matters, and I have no hesitation in saying that Froude's methods are remarkably accurate in comparison with those of Wilson. Wilson seldom quotes letters, journals, diaries, or books of reference with accuracy. He abridges, he omits without marks of omission, he changes the phraseology, he transposes the order of sentences, he does not hesitate to revise Carlyle's own statements, he sometimes condenses in such fashion as to make a writer say the very opposite of what he actually wrote. These are grave charges, but I can substantiate all of them, and I now offer a few examples by way of proof.

On page 65 of his first volume Wilson, in describing Carlyle's school days at Annan, remarks that "much of what he wrote of Wotton Reinfred is likely to be true of himself". He then quotes what appears to an inexperienced reader to be two consecutive paragraphs from *Wotton Reinfred*. No dots of omission occur. The material from which Wilson selects and condenses is spread over pages 16 to 20 of the printed version of *Wotton Reinfred*. In one place he transposes the sentence order. The effect is a change in Carlyle's literary style. In Wilson's abridgement the style is abrupt, the sentences short, the very opposite, indeed, of

Carlyle's manner of writing in *Wotton Reinfred*. This example is typical of Wilson's use of quoted material.

On page 251 of the first volume appears a passage from the "Everlasting No" chapter of *Sartor Resartus*. In regard to it Wilson says: "Besides omitting irrelevant details, the only changes made here in turning the poetry or fiction of *Sartor* into history is writing *Death* instead of 'Tophet,' meaning Hell, which the real Carlyle had long ago perceived to be a superstitious nightmare." The actual passage from *Sartor* reads thus:

Full of such humour, and perhaps the miserablest man in the whole French Capital or Suburbs, was I, one sultry Dog-day, after much perambulation, toiling along the dirty little *Rue Saint-Thomas de l'Enfer*, among civic rubbish enough, in a close atmosphere, and over pavements hot as Nebuchadnezzar's Furnace; whereby doubtless my spirits were little cheered; when, all at once, there rose a Thought in me, and I asked myself: "What *art* thou afraid of? Wherefore, like a coward, dost thou forever pip and whimper, and go cowering and trembling? Despicable biped! what is the sum-total of the worst that lies before thee? Death? Well, Death; and say the pangs of Tophet too, and all that the Devil and Man may, will, or can do against thee! Hast thou not a heart; canst thou not suffer whatsoever it be; and, as a Child of Freedom, though outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet, while it consumes thee? Let it come, then; I will meet it and defy it!" And as I so thought, there rushed like a stream of fire over my whole soul; and I shook base Fear away from me forever. I was strong, of unknown strength; a spirit, almost a god. Ever from that time, the temper of my misery was changed; not Fear or whining Sorrow was it, but Indignation and grim fire-eyed Defiance.

Thus had the EVERLASTING No (*das ewige Nein*) pealed authoritatively through all the recesses of my Being, of my ME; and then it was that my whole ME stood up, in native God-created majesty, and with emphasis recorded its Protest. Such a Protest, the most important transaction in Life, may that same Indignation and Defiance, in a psychological point of view, be fitly called. The Everlasting No had said: "Behold, thou art fatherless, outcast, and the Universe is mine (the Devil's)"; to which my whole ME now made answer: "I am not thine, but Free, and forever hate thee!"

It is from this hour that I incline to date my Spiritual New-



birth, or Baphometric Fire-baptism; perhaps I directly there-upon began to be a Man.

Wilson's version of the foregoing follows:

Full of such humour, and perhaps the miserablest man in the Capital or Suburbs, was I, toiling along over pavements hot as Nebuchadnezzar's Furnace; whereby doubtless my spirits were little cheered; when, all at once, there rose a thought in me, and I asked myself: "What *art* thou afraid of? Wherefore, like a coward, dost thou forever pip and whimper, and go cowering and trembling? Despicable biped! What is the sum-total of the worst that lies before thee? Death? Well, Death; and say all that "man may, will, or can do against thee! Hast thou not a heart; canst thou not suffer whatsoever it be; and, as a child of Freedom, though outcast, trample Death itself under thy feet, while it consumes thee? Let it come, then; I will meet it and defy it!" And as I so thought, there rushed like a stream of fire over my whole soul; and I shook base Fear away from me forever: I was strong, of unknown strength; a spirit, almost a god. Ever from that time, the temper of my misery was changed; not Fear or whining Sorrow was it, but Indignation and grim, fire-eyed Defiance.

The Everlasting No had said: "Behold, thou art fatherless, outcast and the Universe is mine (the Devil's)"; to which my whole Me now made answer: "I am not thine, but Free, and forever hate thee!"

From this hour I began to be a Man.

Here is the way Wilson quotes one of Carlyle's letters to Robert Mitchell. Carlyle under date of July 5, 1817, is discussing Dr. Chalmers's *Astronomical Discourses*:

But Dr. Chalmers, it would seem, is fearful lest these speculations lead us away from Christianity, and to prove the truth of religion his best argument seems to be, that as it is in the Scriptures, we have no business to think about it at all—an argument well enough known before. One is a little surprised to see the Doctor so vehement in his praise of Newton for rejecting all manner of probabilities, and refusing to admit any hypothesis till it was supported by direct and incontrovertible proof. Without doubt this answers in the present instance, but will lead to alarming results. Christianity itself is only supported by probabilities. But here, we are to believe everything that is told us; which is a very com-

fortable way of reasoning. It is perhaps not surprising that the author should deal so largely in denunciations against his adversaries.

What Carlyle actually wrote to Mitchell was this:

But Dr. Chalmers, it would seem, is fearful lest these speculations lead us away from Christianity, and has written a volume of *Discourses* to prove that the insignificance of our planet in the Universe is no argument against the truth of religion. Orthodox men declare, of course, that he has completely discomfited his opponents. I read it some time ago. It abounds in that fiery, thoroughgoing style of writing for which the Author is so remarkable; nevertheless his best argument seems to be, that as it is in the Scriptures, we have no business to think about it at all—an argument which was well enough known to be a panacea in cases of that nature before his volume saw the light. One is a little surprised to see the Doctor so vehement in his praise of Newton for what certainly was very laudable—his rejecting all manner of probabilities, and refusing to admit any hypothesis till it was supported by direct and uncontrovertible proof. Without doubt this answers exactly in the present instance, but if carried to its full extent on the other side, it will lead to alarming results. Christianity itself is only supported by probabilities; very strong ones certainly, but still only probabilities. But here, we are informed, it is necessary 'to sit down with the docility of little children' and believe everything that is told us; which is a very comfortable way of reasoning. It is perhaps not surprising that the Author should be dogmatical; but it seems strange, when his own side of the case is so very evident, that he should deal so largely in denunciations against his adversaries.

Now for an example of Wilson's method of interpreting an incident in Carlyle's life; namely, his application in 1833 for the professorship of Astronomy at the University of Edinburgh. What he is trying to convince us of at this point is that Carlyle had special qualifications for the post to which Jeffrey failed to appoint him. This is a charming example of assertion without proof, and of footnote references which contain nothing to support the text. Wilson's account follows:

Jeffrey was bent on setting an example how to select a man for such an appointment, and had been making it known in

every way he could "that no testimonials *would be looked at*, except from persons of weight and authority in this particular branch of science," and that "Government" (which meant Jeffrey) would give the place "according to the recommendations of Herschell, Airy, Babbage, and some six or seven other" such men, including Brewster and Napier.

Accordingly it had been offered to Thomas Galloway, who had been a candidate for the Natural Philosophy chair last winter, and was one of the best of living astronomers. But he declined . . . His greatest achievement was to prove the movement of the Sun, that it sweeps through space with all its planets like a huge steamer with a few small boats in tow; and observations at the Cape of Good Hope were used by Galloway in showing this. Now the Cape Observer was Thomas Henderson, an Edinburgh man, once Jeffrey's clerk and secretary. So Henderson applied for the Edinburgh place, as Galloway did not want it.

It seemed an ideal solution, agreeable and right. Then came the letter from Carlyle, which Jeffrey answered by return of post, though wearied and unwell (14.1.1834). *As he had no inkling of Carlyle's special qualifications*, and never knew that Galloway, Brewster and Co. would have preferred Carlyle to Henderson, he must have supposed he was being requested to be partial, and may have been pleased to show how he could select a professor more fairly and sensibly than the Town Councillors last winter.

Wilson inserts a footnote to the effect that Thomas Galloway was "Grand uncle of D. A. W[ilson], who knew his widow, and inherited his papers: but what it is needful to tell here has long been in print. See *Dictionary of National Biography*, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 11th Edition, and see the *Memoir of Augustus de Morgan*, by his wife, pp. 60, 155, 180-182, etc., etc."

Let us see for a moment what Carlyle himself has to say about the matter: "I think it must have been the latter part of next year [1833] when Jeffrey's correspondence with me sputtered out into something of sudden life again—and something so unlucky that it proved to be, essentially, death instead! The case was this: We heard copiously, in the Newspapers, that the Edinburgh people, in a meritorious scientific spirit, were about remodelling their old Astronomical Observatory; and at length that they had brought it to the proper pitch of real equipment, and that nothing now was wanting but a fit Observer to make it scientifically useful and

notable. I had hardly even looked through a telescope, but I had good strength in Mathematics, in Astronomy, and did not doubt but I could soon been at home in such an enterprise, if I fairly entered on it."

Carlyle's own words certainly do not confirm Wilson's assertion about "special qualifications," nor does Wilson produce any evidence to support his statement that Galloway and Brewster "would have preferred" Carlyle, nor were Galloway and Brewster the best judges. Herschell, Airy, and Babbage were the men best qualified to judge. Finally, Wilson's references in the footnote contain nothing in support of the text.

Indeed, one of the most serious of Wilson's faults is that of making uncorroborated assertions, or statements confirmed only by anonymous evidence. This habit is the more amusing for the reason that in the first book of his Carlyle series, *Mr. Froude and Carlyle*, he attempts to establish an air of veracity and importance by insisting upon the value of trustworthy evidence. "In a literary inquiry," he writes, "we are independent of legal rules, but not of logic and common sense. We must discount hearsay evidence, and believe nothing but what there is credible evidence for." In the light of such admonition it is curious to observe the extent to which he makes use of gossip and other anonymous testimony, a habit which he carries over to his biography of Carlyle. His pages present such phrases as "An ex-servant of the Carlyles . . . mentioned a thing"; "one worthy gentleman resident in Dumfriesshire . . . could have told him much about Carlyle"; Carlyle "noticed and remarked confidentially to a very intimate friend"; "An eye-witness . . . gave me a comical description of an evening with the Carlyles"; "there is excellent reason to believe."

In his attempt to show that Carlyle could do no wrong, Wilson has been compelled to portray Mrs. Carlyle in a most unpleasant fashion. Now, there is no necessity in a biography of Carlyle to take sides with either Thomas or Jane. It is sufficient to present them as they were. From the days of her courtship, however, down to the very last, Wilson would have us believe that Jane was the more fortunate partner, that she was the one for whom Carlyle was always sacrificing himself. Now and then, however, he forgets himself and lapses into such a statement as this: "Their married life was one long honeymoon of forty years, with hardly enough of a breeze to vary the monotony." His own works on



Carlyle carry sufficient refutation of such a statement as the foregoing.

The most disagreeable feature, however, in connection with his attitude toward Mrs. Carlyle is the manner in which he presented a portrait of her painted by Gambardella. Having misinterpreted a letter of Francis Jeffrey in regard to a portrait of Mrs. Carlyle painted in her girlhood, and having decided that the portrait by Gambardella was the one in question, Wilson proceeded to have a hideous caricature of the Gambardella drawn and inserted opposite page 176 of the first volume of his *Carlyle*. I call the caricature the "sea-serpent portrait" of Jane Welsh. It was unfair, to say the least, and the expedient ultimately reflected discredit upon its perpetrator. Wilson has never offered any satisfactory excuse for this distortion of the portrait by Gambardella.

This disagreeable habit of misrepresentation Wilson has carried over to his treatment of two other personages important in the Carlyle circle—Geraldine Jewsbury and Frederick Martin. He long ago made up his mind that the suggestion of Carlyle's sexual incompetency originated with Miss Jewsbury, or perhaps with Martin. In consequence these two come in for some rough handling on the part of Wilson. Here is the way he goes about the task. On pages 117-118 of the fifth volume of *Carlyle* he refers to the annulment of the marriage of John Ruskin and Euphemia Chalmers Gray, "which," he writes, "deserves mention here because it seems to have suggested to Geraldine Jewsbury an explanation why Carlyle had never responded to her advances, even when she laid herself at his feet, as she once did. 'He must be like another Ruskin,' Geraldine Jewsbury would think, and by-and-by she confided her vain imagination as a fact to Froude, and Froude was foolish enough to believe it. At least he said so. In fairness to Geraldine we should never forget that there is no corroboration of Froude's story, and that nobody of sense can feel sure of anything he said, especially anything of that sort, without corroboration. Perhaps the likeliest guess is that Froude may have merely enquired of the unfortunate lady whether she had heard the story, and she may have said something in reply which he took for corroboration." All in all, I think Wilson has done great harm to Miss Jewsbury's reputation, harm which I am hoping will be offset by Miss Susanne Howe's biography of Geraldine, which is now in preparation.

Worst of all, however, is the treatment which Frederick Martin has received at the hands of Wilson, who, following the lead of Alexander Carlyle, succeeds in going far beyond him. Upon the very flimsiest evidence he brands Martin as "a would-be Judas," "a knave," "a drunkard," "a parasite," and "a thief." Chapter iii of Book xxiii of Wilson's fifth volume of *Carlyle* is entitled "A Thief in the House." In this chapter Wilson tells the story of Carlyle's employing the new clerk. "He called himself Frederick Martin;" writes Wilson, "and [he] had been bred in Berlin, a blend of Jew and Slav by blood . . . He snivelled a good deal, a frequent drop depending from his nose, which made him unpleasant close at hand to Carlyle, whose senses were acute. So [he] was readily allowed to take papers home to copy; which gave him access to where papers were kept and possession of manuscripts in his own house, whereby he was gradually able to steal a great many, becoming cunning in choosing what would not be missed. He stole a great deal of the Frederick manuscript by merely omitting to return it. He also abstracted from drawers hundreds of old letters and other papers. Many have not yet been published; some have, such as *The Reminiscences of my Irish Journey in 1849*, *Last Words of Thomas Carlyle* . . . and many letters. What made stealing easy was that Carlyle in his modesty little suspected that there was any money value in these things . . . The fellow's opportunity was brief, but he made the most of it."

In a footnote Wilson says that Francis Espinasse and J. T. Wells, who was for many years a missionary in Edinburgh, described Martin to him from personal knowledge. He refers especially to Espinasse's *Literary Recollections* and Moncure Conway's *Autobiography*. The truth is that Wilson accepts what Alexander Carlyle, Francis Espinasse, and Moncure Conway assert. He has prosecuted no vigorous research into the facts of Martin's life, nor has he even told his readers anything of Martin's very considerable literary achievement and standing. He does proceed in this way: "In 1895 an honest bookseller in Edinburgh showed D. A. W. a collection of T. C. letters he had bought and wished to sell for seventy pounds. He allowed them all to be read and shown to David Masson and others, on receiving a promise to do nothing to lessen the selling value. We all agreed that these were documents probably stolen by Frederick Martin. Neither

Ballantyne nor Neuberg nor Larkin had anything to do with the stolen manuscripts."

A little farther on, page 268 of volume v, in discussing some of Carlyle's correspondence with Joseph Neuberg about portions of the *Frederick* manuscript, Wilson says: "Here it may be reported that about sixty years later a credible man reported [to Wilson] that he had been consulted by 'a great American publisher' about a set of Carlyle manuscripts on George II. It did not seem worth while to publish what appeared to be merely the rough draft of what is printed in the 'Frederick' and could be discovered there easily by any one referring to the index. The only interesting detail was that, although there was no sufficient proof, the probabilities were that the original seller of the manuscripts was Frederick Martin." Again on page 565 of the same fifth volume he says that in 1865, when Carlyle was clearing up the debris accumulated during the preparation of *Frederick*, and returning borrowed books, atlases, etc., "some of the many papers stolen by Frederick Martin had been missed." I have sought in vain for adequate proof that Frederick Martin stole any of Carlyle's papers. In Froude's preface to Carlyle's *Reminiscences of my Irish Journey* this information appears: "The manuscript is not one of those which were entrusted by Mr. Carlyle to myself. It consists merely of fragmentary notes, to which he attributed no importance. He gave it to Mr. Neuberg, who was then acting as his secretary; Mr. Neuberg gave it to the late Mr. Thomas Ballantyne; by Mr. Ballantyne it was sold to a Mr. Anderson, from whom it came into the hands of the present publishers. They being in possession of the property were free to do with it as they pleased; but they were good enough to ask my opinion as to the propriety of giving it to the world, and I saw no objection to their doing so."

When we turn to an examination of the actual facts of Martin's career we are forced to conclusions directly the opposite of those set forth by David Wilson and his confreres. Here is the article which appeared in the London *Athenæum*, February 3, 1883:

We greatly regret to record the death of Mr. Frederick Martin, the well-known compiler of *The Statesman's Year-Book*. Mr. Martin was a native of Switzerland, and early in life he came to England. He was for some years Carlyle's

secretary and helped him in his literary labours—performing, in fact, the various services, which, shortly after he left Carlyle, were gratuitously undertaken by Mr. Larkin,—and his knowledge of German and his capacity for work made him a most useful assistant. He commenced some ten years ago an excellent account of Carlyle's early life in a magazine which he started that was devoted to biography, but the "Sage of Chelsea" objected to its publication, and Mr. Martin did not continue it.

In 1863 Mr. Martin began the publication of his most successful enterprise, *The Statesman's Year-Book*. In 1865 he issued his *Life of John Clare*, in which he gave a striking, but rather overcharged picture of Clare's unhappy career. In 1867 he produced an excellent commercial handbook of France. In 1870 he brought out *A Handbook of Contemporary Biography*, which did not meet with the success it deserved. Five years afterwards he published an excellent *History of Lloyd's*. In 1879 Lord Beaconsfield, struck by the extreme usefulness of *The Statesman's Year-Book*, conferred of his own accord a pension of one hundred pounds a year on Mr. Martin. He continued to supervise his *Year-Book* until December last, when his failing health compelled him to retire.

As the *Year-Book* shows, Mr. Martin was an able and industrious man of letters, possessed of much knowledge and a fluent style. He was an occasional contributor to this journal, and during his busy life he wrote largely for various papers.

I may add to this notice that in 1865 a reprint of some of Martin's articles appeared in volume form under the title *Stories of Banks and Bankers*, which show considerable ability. There are admirably written descriptive passages in his novel, *The Story of Alec Drummond of the 17th Lancers*, published in 1869. The *History of Lloyd's* and of *Marine Insurance in Great Britain* runs to 416 pages. He also wrote one of the volumes, 775 double column quarto pages, of the *National History of England*, which must have cost him an immense amount of labor. Indeed, an examination of his work leaves one with the impression that he was a very competent and conscientious historian and publicist.

If Martin was incapable as a secretary in 1856 and 1857 he certainly did not long remain so. Born in Geneva and educated at Heidelberg, he was doubtless a much better French and German scholar than Carlyle, and I suspect that, like Joseph Neuberg, he



rendered invaluable services to Carlyle. What seems evident is that both Carlyle and his wife took a dislike to Martin. Their letters suggest that he was badly treated, and he was probably underpaid for his services.

It is hard to conceive that a man with a record so honorable and useful should have run the risk of being held up to public obloquy as a traitor and thief, and should have behaved in the manner suggested by Conway, Alexander Carlyle, and David Wilson. What we have is the uncorroborated statement of Moncure Conway in 1904 that about 1882 Martin was, under suspicious circumstances, offering for sale a journal of Carlyle and letters from Emerson to Carlyle. Conway's statement—and I have shown elsewhere that he was very careless in making statements—appears to be the only published evidence supporting Alexander Carlyle's, and therefore David Wilson's assertion that Martin was "a sneak-thief" and "stole a great many of" Carlyle's "manuscripts."

Obviously, on the strength of a few letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle having been offered for sale in 1914, over thirty years after Martin's death, no one has a right to declare that in 1857, twenty-six years before his death, Martin stole them. Lastly, the surrender of the letters to Alexander Carlyle's solicitors in 1914 does not necessarily mean that the person or persons who had instructed the dealers to sell them admitted that they had no title to the manuscripts and that the manuscripts had been stolen. Such person or persons may not have been prepared or in a position to incur the expenses involved in fighting even a successful action at law. If the vendor or vendors were children of Martin there was an additional reason why they should have avoided litigation. They would have been dragging their father's name through the mire. In short, the whole story rests on the weakest of circumstantial evidence. I wish that some young scholar would undertake an investigation of the life and work of Frederick Martin. Such a study would be well worth the time, and should help to settle one of the vexing questions in connection with the so-called thefts of certain of Carlyle's papers.

The foregoing, then, are some of the characteristics of this vast compilation which Mr. Wilson calls *Carlyle*. I should like to know what Carlyle himself would say of it. One regrets that a man who has invested so many years of his life in such an enterprise

should not have taken care to be painstaking, straightforward, and judicial. Professor William Lyon Phelps has published a letter in which Wilson refers to the fact that in Burma he was known as "the hanging judge," because he hanged more offenders in that country than any judge who had preceded him. If he hanged them on evidence as bad as that which appears throughout the pages of his biography of Carlyle, I should not care to stand in his place.

*by Alice Freda Braunlich*

### WITH ACID BE THEY ETCHED

I shall remember these to my last hour:  
My mother's hands, wherein my cut head lies  
Protected through slow surgery; *his* eyes,  
Where dreaming love awakes to sudden power;  
A radiant little lass beneath a shower  
Of pink magnolias, who toddling tries  
To clasp a wayward petal as it flies,  
Herself more dainty—sweet than any flower.

Beautiful lines endure in tempered steel,  
With acid be they etched or with sharp pain,  
Which both alike bite deep and disappear.  
I scarce recall how pricking needles feel,  
Or that my lover loved me not again,  
Or that my child was dead within a year.

by Leo A. Spiegel

## THE NEW JARGON

### PSYCHOLOGY IN LITERATURE

**I**S there a legitimate distinction between a well-written case-report and a thorough going psychological novel? Are our novelists becoming psychiatrists?

Every age has its field of thought, its particular pastures whose grasses it prefers to chew. Our writers are at present chewing on psychology. And countless novelists, critics, biographers, and dramatists throw out confusedly a psychological jargon as if to say they, too, are in on the great scientific parade. And so a very good critic, Floyd Dell, takes to reporting Mental Hygiene conferences. The ponderous *Neue Deutsche Rundschau* contains a paper on the unpretentious Gide, in which owlish references to the *Fonction du Réel* of Janet are somehow dragged in. The French have for the most part clung to their classical good taste and have refused to combine what they could not synthesize. American and German writers, with uncontrolled Romanticism, are psychologizing at top speed. It is evident that the psycho-analytical school is to a certain degree responsible for these curious alliances. It has claimed to bring the most valuable assistance to the fields of biography, of criticism, of literature in general. Our men of letters have turned about and now consider that they too in their (modest) way have something to offer to psychology; so that Dostoevsky as an artist may be forgotten but as an epileptologist he remains unrivalled.

#### I

The protagonist in our modern novels is often a psychiatrist. He is invested with a slight air of mystery, the other characters are somewhat afraid of him for he may penetrate to their innermost thoughts. Thus we find Ludwig Lewisohn combining a new Zionism and a passionate devotion to Freud in his *Island Within*, which gives him an opportunity to lecture misinformingly and at great length on both topics. . . . "Yes, the mechanism of the Jewish anti-Jewish complex was precisely analogous to the mechanism of insanity. . . . He had felt this urge toward flight himself, flight

away from a reality that had no inner meaning. . . . Yet if insanity were in many cases merely a violent exaggeration under excessive pressure of processes and techniques of the so-called normal psyche—then—then—. Or again "his patients were nearly all Jews. He found that their psychical aches and inhibitions and discomforts were all flights from an obscure reality. They substituted; they interposed the barriers of phobias between themselves and reality: they were in perpetual flight". Here are the very makings of a Jewish psychiatry.

These fictional psychiatrists are all extraordinarily able. Diagnoses spring from them effortlessly. "He at once recognized the fact that his sister was deliberately and volitionally heightening half-hysterical symptoms in order to be protected against the necessity of explanation. "It was his first important case. If he could use the Adler short-cut(?) here and avoid a long psycho-therapeutic process it might be the beginning of a practice". The diagnosis? "Case of a man suffering from complete psychical impotence". And what the cure? . . . . "He explained to Mr. Prout that the phenomena he deplored was in nearly all cases psychical in origin and hence curable. . . . There is something in his relation to a woman, let us say that the patient will not admit to himself, will not permit to rise into the field of consciousness at all". There follows a further detailed discussion. And what happened to the patient? . . . . "He got up. He roared in unconscious joyous liberation". And so our young psychiatrist, with the help of a little psychic impotence, is launched upon a successful career, although why a case, being psychical in origin, should be necessarily curable is incomprehensible. Still our psychiatrist is not altogether safe himself". A faint fear stole into Arthur's heart. He found himself surreptitiously touching objects on his desk with the half-conscious intent of warding off ill-luck. . . . It was amusing that he, of all people, should nurse a compulsion-neurosis". It would be interesting to ascertain Mr. Lewisohn's idea of a compulsion neurosis. He mentions it as casually as if it were a common cold.

How many of our modern heroes have been 'psychically crippled', by a strong infantile fixation on a too dominant mother, it is difficult to enumerate. Myron Brinig's Anthony (*Anthony in the Nude*) was such an unfortunate. "Perhaps without quite realizing it, loved his mother, had, in fine, a mother complex". And



Sherwood Anderson's Bruce (*Dark Laughter*) was unlucky enough to "get his notion of mother all mixed up with a feeling for river". Coming back, to our Anthony, he is unfortunate a second time in having an affair with Helen, who is his exact counterpart; who evidently harbors an Electra Complex. "Helen was modern, a woman aware of psychiatry, Freud, Jung, Psychoanalysis". . . . "In a household where the husband and wife are incompatible, and the only child is a girl, there is apt to develop a strong, vivid affection between the father and daughter". What happened when these two cases collided is detailed in the rest of the novel. In his *Sons and Lovers*, D. H. Lawrence has the following reference to technical theories of the family constellation. . . . "but when William went to Nottingham and was not so much at home, the mother made a companion of Paul. The latter was unconsciously jealous of his brother, and William was jealous of him. At the same time they were good friends". Or Paul Rosenfeld discussing James Joyce's *Ulysses*, in *Twenty-One Men Seen*, Stephen is incapable, alone, of freeing himself from a fixation upon his dead mother, since the complex is intensified by the maryolatry of the church and the masochistic tendency of his race". The Oedipus Complex has in addition proved a boon to biographers. Rudolph Kayser in Stendhal: "Seine Liebe zur Mutter (A. 7-8) war glühende Leidenschaft, rasend bis zum Körperlichen. Er wollte ihren Leib mit Küssen bedecken, und keine Kleider sollten an ihr sein. Eifersüchtig hasste er den Vater". From Krutch in *Edgar Allan Poe*; "his mother exercised a baneful fascination through some memory or still obscurer cause his imagination was fixed on her. She too, perhaps, stood between him and normal fruition of love".

In addition to the orthodox Freudian complexes the Adlerian inferiority complex has been invoked. Again in Edgar Allan Poe: "Beginning with some sense of inferiority he seeks methods of self-assurance and self-glorification". His sense of inferiority of course comes from his previously referred fixation on his mother. This gives rise to the "psychic impotence of his sexual nature." Finally we find that "we have traced Poe's art to an abnormal condition of the nerves". Mr. Van Wyck Brooks emphasizes in *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*, that the latter's dream of boyhood had been to become "something gorgeous and active", where his word

constituted "law". . . . "Here we see exhibited what A. Adler calls 'masculine protest', the desire to be more than manly in order to escape a feeling of insecurity". Proof of this lies in the fact that "Mark Twain was a weak child, and couldn't have survived if he hadn't exerted his imagination and prevailed over his companions by means other than physical". Heine also, (*That Man Heine*, Lewis Browne) "labored under an obsession of inferiority". In addition to exposing his motivation in devious ways, Heine's most striking give-away was his wit. Who, could be so uncultured as to ignore that Freud demonstrated that Heine "used wit as a mechanism to relieve an internal, spiritual conflict". All [witticisms of Heine] were mechanisms of defence, motivating them, was a deep, a ranking lack of poise. Mr. Van Wyck Brooks clutches tenaciously at involved psychological explanations and indicates that Mark Twain in some way sold rather than fulfilled his soul, by becoming that poor thing a "humorist". He adopted the rôle unwillingly, as a compromise, because it afforded" [by payments of money, plus the popularity of *Jumping Frog*] "success". A letter from Mark Twain to his brother indicated his reluctance in submitting *Jumping Frog*. "I am in for it. Until I marry then, I am done with lit. and all other bosh that is, Lit. wherewith to please the general public. I shall write to please myself then". Mr. Van Wyck Brooks minimizes this and sees no escape for poor Mark Twain whose destiny, with the astounding success of *Jumping Frog*, is no longer under his own control. Why not simply admit that Mark Twain saw good enough reasons why money might be of advantage, instead of mystifying us with being a humorist afforded the only available means of satisfying that other instinct which, in the unconsciousness of his creative instinct had become dominant in him, the gregarious, acquisitive instinct of the success-loving pioneer". Ah, all these Punchinellos, who apparently amuse their audiences with a careless and impudent wit, how many of them are being tortured by rankling conflicts and how many others fondly imagining themselves happy, unwittingly nurse sub-conscious conflicts!

References to the unconscious, to dark and hidden forces, to anything but the obvious, abound. Mr. O'Neill in *Strange Interlude*: "She's got to find normal outlets for her craving of sacrifice". . . . queer house, something wrong with its psyche. "Pres-

ent state of her mind, real and unreal, become confused". Again Mr. Lewisohn in *Stephen Escott*, "All contacts with reality, I repressed. . . . I waked up, erotically stimulated, found half-lost memories flowing almost like a palpable liquid, into my consciousness from the dark regions of the lower mind". In *Aaron's Rod*, Lawrence writes; "telling isn't so easy especially when the trouble goes too deep for conscious comprehensions". . . . "But though you can deceive the conscious mind, you can never deceive the deep, unconscious instinct". George Viereck and Paul Eldridge employ this Press Notice: "reincarnation and the Freudian theme of repetition and compulsion as leitmotif". Further, "Psychoanalysis is the key that unlocks the uttermost portals;. . . . The unconscious mind never forgets". "We reached the end of his conscious life but have hardly ope'd the portals of his subconscious".

This terminology has spread to every class of author, so that even aristocratic detective writers have seized the device. Mr. Van Dine, the present super-Sherlock Holmes, stoops to "But it is problematic if even Vance, with his fine analytic mind and his remarkable flair for the subtleties of human psychology could have solved it". Mr. Walling in *Man with the Squeaky Voice*. . . . "a bit of psychoanalyst, Bowles. It was wonderful what a change came over them, when he rid them of their inferiority complex". One new detective writer, Mrs. Eberhart, takes the more prosaic view and speaks of crime being diminished without psychological aid. "When we hear less of releasing repressed desires and more talk of exercising decent self-control, then only will we have less crime"! Many other writers of the same type would not consider their volumes complete without reference to the subconscious;. . . . "the memory of some astounding occurrence welled up from the subconscious". or "something twitters a warning note in my subconscious".

That most popular magazine, the *Saturday Evening Post*, despite a certain amount of conservatism, is quite willing for its popular authors to be up-to-date. We find little gems like this cropping up ever so often. . . . "but this money complex people have is so stupid." References to the "oedipus complexes" are as frequent as their plus-fours. No complex is safe from these word-mongers. "Moving life of the pavement below, was a subconscious compensation. . . . But he's a neurotic, with a ruthless streak of

cruelty and an abnormal passion for domination, which he has indulged all his life." Mr. Warwick Deeping, in the book *Exile*, contributes a few thoughts on the subject of psychology. "He was not interested in mental hygiene. These people amused him—there were no social repression, no reservation". Mr. Watson would be pleased by this commendation, "Behaviour was the bed upon which his psychology reposed." Mr. Percy Shostac finds the science of material assistance in his novel in Verse, *14th St.*,

Writing is a gesture to compensate. . .

Liberated emotions are compensated by a

corresponding set-back.

Sublimation is no answer to my problem now.

A phrase like "Energized the inaction of my frustration", shows how grossly misinterpreted a notion may become.

As always, when a particular topic has been exalted, some of the more acrid poke fun at the worshippers. To wit, Aldous Huxley, in *Brief Candles* finds the "Influence effective because she resembled her mother congenitally". or "perhaps Pamela was thinking he was a sadist—, in that book of Kraft-Ebbing's there had been a lot about sadists." Another author: V. D. W. the eminent psychologist, said the case, peculiar to the lay-eye, of the beautiful Mrs. M. G. isn't so strange to the student of feminine psychology. Sometimes a little seed dropped in earliest childhood brings such a result. For instance, the photographer may say 'See the birdie' to a child, who, the day before was bitten by her grandmother's macaw, never again can that child face the camera without experiencing absolute agony." Rose Macaulay's elderly character, Mrs. Hilary, (*Dangerous Ages*) questions her more modern daughter-in-law: "This psycho-analysis. I suppose it does make wonderful cures, doesn't it? . . . Oh yes. Wonderful cures, Shell-shock, insomnia, nervous depression, suicide, mania, family life, anything! . . . Later: "He's very good. He turns you right inside out and shows you everything about yourself, from your first infant passion to the thoughts you think you're keeping dark". . . . Still later: "Every age in human life has its own adjustments to make—All that repressed libido must be released and diverted. Bad complexes must be sublimated. Mrs. Hilary knew it would be delightful and luxurious."



The psycho-analysts do not hesitate to confirm in literature what they find so easy to discover in clinical practice. Ernest Jones has made a deep impression with his study of *Hamlet*. Dostoevsky who is familiarly enough known as the finest psychological writer, is "psyched" from every angle on the assumption that "studies demonstrate again and again that a neurosis may cripple the man but make the artist." Consequently Mr. S. Burchell, in the *Psycho-analytic Review* of 1930, writes a paper on Dostoevsky and the Sense of Guilt. Mr. Burchell claims that the particular trait he wishes to consider "and without which appreciation of it many things in his life and works remain enigmatic", is a "strong sense of guilt and concomitant need for punishment". Of course his sense of guilt was "unconscious" and caused him to subject himself to punishments. This is traced back to Dostoevsky's relationship to his father, and further, "his earliest reading was done in the book of 'Job', and the great prophet of masochism welcoming his woes, was to remain a favorite throughout life." Dostoevsky is by no means the be-all and end-all of material for the psycho-analyst. Dr. Lucile Dorley, in the same journal turns to Emily Brontë. Many of her poems are quoted to show that the "Keynote of personality was compensation for many privations. . . . much of her compensating activity was unconscious."

As much as we may appreciate clinical psycho-analytic technic, nevertheless its attitude toward literature is quite sophomoric. The titles given to various chapters of S. E. Jelliffe's and A. Brink's *Psychology and the Drama* will reveal how far astray detailed gropings can lead one. "Phantasy Compensation through Dreams, Peter Ibbetson". . . . "Alcoholism and the Phantasy Life, Tolstoy's Redemption". . . . "Natural Path of Sublimation, Yellow Jacket" . . . . "Compulsion and Freedom, Willow Tree". It need not be doubted that the analyses are detailed expansions with some far-fetched complexes thrown in to enhance the plays.

## II

Carl Van Vechten in *Peter Whiffle* glimpsed the truth when he said "Any novelist who involves the aid of science dies a swift death. . . . the current craze is for psycho-analytic novels, which are not half so psychological as the books of Jane Austen, as

posterity will find out for itself". . . . Whence this current craze?

As has been seen, there are three groups of writers who are riding psychology as their hobby horse. The first group are writers of magazine stories and of detective fiction. These people want to make an impression. Usually they would not be worth while bothering with, but they here perform a valuable function. When our more snobbish *littérati* find they are no longer making themselves exclusive by the use of what was not formerly doubted (an indication of intellectual esotericism) they will drop the psychological attitude. Its adoption by the second-raters of literature will succeed in driving more reputable writers from the field of psychology.

Psychology has indubitably been used even by prominent authors to add impressiveness and apparent solidity. We feel that both writer and reader have had the sentiment that not only were they enjoying themselves, but that they were adding to their store of scientific information. As to whether that is possible we shall return later. When an author can invoke the dark gods within and describe all sorts of irrational behavior of half-suspected urges and desires, he, without establishing a fairly clear motivation, has opened a new field for further exploitation and for stunning the unsophisticated reader. Of course this possibility has proved a gold mine to the literary biographer. Why rest content merely to describe an apparently inexplicable side of an author's life and work? That was good enough for old-time chroniclers who put in dates and such nonsense. We postulate a few traumas of early childhood or a couple of infantile fixations or, if the parents cannot be blamed, we can still find a father-surrogate. One is irresistibly reminded of the originators of the theory of the subconscious, Hartman and Richter: "We are very happy, for in us everything is unconsciousness. Is not the discovery of such a wealth of soul a consoling one? We can hope that in the depths of our hearts we love God much more deeply than we know, with an unconscious love, and that our mute instinct works within us with the other world in sight whereas we only have the consciousness of amusing ourselves down here." Thus, many of our writers have also been delighted to find such unsuspected riches in what were before uninteresting people.

The motivation for the scramble to psychology seems to have been of a double nature. Partly the use of apparently technical

terminology, wrapped around the novelist critic, and biographer the mantle of unimpeachable science. But mostly the new psychology added virginal territory to be exploited. The quest for new forms must ever, in art, be one of the most potent factors in its evolution. A new form, a new thrill, a reawakening of interest is of vital matter to the artist: and this has certainly been found in the psychology of the day. Apart from the motivation of this movement the prime question must remain its validity. This validity can be considered from two approaches: its value from the literary view-point, and its value as documentation. This second approach will, of course, have the most importance in the consideration of biography.

Before considering these topics, we may first of all dismiss the scientific value of the new psychological novel as negligible. At least negligible from the scientific view-point. The difficulties in the way of accurate explanation, when observations are taken professionally, are great enough without introducing new factors of error. This is not to belittle the great interest of some of characterizations of Huysmans or of the more often referred to in this connection, Dostoievsky. But when psychiatrists find the interpretation of closely followed cases hazardous, what shall be said of the non-professional observation of the novelist? Psychology has often been accused of being a pseudo-science. And with sufficient reason—for the observing of psychological facts is in itself difficult. It is so easy to modify slightly an observation to force it to agree with a theory. There is nothing wrong about a novelist doing this in accordance with the need for dramatic action. But what is needed in psychology is the accumulation of facts, unmixed with theory, drama, or art. Of course just as many of our novelists feel they are adding to their prestige by employing psychology, so do many prominent psychologists feel that they are increasing the value of their work by discussing literature. Does this indicate that both novelist and psychologist are neither fish nor fowl?

Now, what has psychology to offer to literature? In the field of biography we find the most frequent use of psychological theory, and perhaps the most justifiable, especially in so far as the author confines himself not to the works but to the life of his hero. Evidently, the biographer ought take his information where he

can get it. And he probably should be as eclectic as possible. For him the historical, the sociological, and the psychological are equally valid. Still, people who most engaged in biographical writing (except for the excursions of some psycho-analysts such as Jones, Pierce-Clark) are literary men. As such, they are not accustomed to handling with sufficient scepticism the bold and as yet unproved assumptions of some intrepid scientists.

We are reminded of an ingenious article by Ernest Jones which appeared some years ago in the *Journal of Social and Abnormal Psychology* with reference to the psychology of Louis Bonaparte, the brother of Napoleon. The author intended to demonstrate that peculiarities of Louis Bonaparte could be traced to a suppressed homo-sexuality. He concluded, "the object of the present paper is merely to illustrate that knowledge gained from psychopathology, and unobtainable in any other way, may be of service in helping to elucidate even purely historical problems." Perhaps the reason for the commendable lack of haste of the historians to avail themselves of this oracular method of interpreting historical phenomena may be found in the symposium that followed. Dr. Stanley Hall asked the very simple question: "Was the evidence clear that Louis Napoleon had homo-sexual impulses. . . and having indulged them?" To which Dr. Jones responded, "Not the slightest evidence of his having indulged them and I never hinted this in my paper. The evidence for it lies in his delusions of jealousy and of persecution." Similarly, critics like Krutch, Mumford, and Lavrin have interpreted the lives of Poe and Melville and Dostoevsky. They proceed along the same line and feel that they thus have made a great advance on the old time biographer.

Of course the judgment as to the scientific value must remain a question of evidence. We cannot dogmatically admit that, given these characteristics in the subject of the biography, the following must have been the dynamics of his psychology. Let it not be supposed that a hostile attitude toward psycho-analysis is here necessary. When the biographer uses the terminology of a given science, he must be ready to submit his theory to criticism on scientific grounds. That is does his evidence warrant his theory? We have already indicated how difficult it is for the psychiatrist in the presence of, to some extent, controllable facts to theorize satisfactorily. What then is to be said of the biographer who deals



with dimmed facts, contested facts, facts observed by untrained people, biographical certificates derived from writings, and then builds a terrifying superstructure on them?

When Mr. Janko Lavrin (because Dostoivsky speaks of "doubles") says, "Long before Freud's and Jung's discoveries Dostoievsky endeavored to arrive at the fundamental nature of dreams and show their significance in a new light, as symbolic projection of our unconscious in to our conscious ego", or when Mr. Krutch definitely classifies Poe's tales as being morbid and neurotic "because they represent a desperate flight from all reality", or Mr. Mumford vaguely hints at "a dozen possible circumstances occurring long after childhood, which may have contributed to Melville's regression" sexually (such as Elizabeth, patient as a wife, was timid and irresponsible as a lover") what they say is confusion doubly confounded. The reader might timidly ask, what proof have you? What evidence, for example, has Mumford that Elizabeth was "timid and irresponsible as a lover"? What evidence that Melville regressed sexually? To make that judgment on the basis of Melville's writings is hazardous. Havellock Ellis long ago pointed out the often direct opposition between a man's life and his writings.

Far more suitable for the psychiatric approach is August Strindberg. Dr. McGill's *Bedeveled Viking* attempts an explanation of his life. The literary deficiencies of this biography have been sufficiently treated in the excellent review of Herbert Schwartz in the *New York Sun* of May 29, 1930, but one may here criticize its psychiatric aspect. Dr. McGill presented this theory of Strindberg's undoubted delusions of grandeur and persecution: "Thus the delusions of grandeur and persecution were also bound up causally with jealousy, the sense of inferiority and the Oedipus Complex." Where does Dr. McGill find this sense of inferiority and these Oedipus feelings? The only evidence of these feelings one can find in the book are some references to homesickness and to great affection for his mother. Were these sufficiently exaggerated to account for his pathological states? A good example of the speculative character of the modern scientific approach is Woodward's explanations of Grant's taboos. One of General Grant's taboos was an aversion to firearms and to the killing of animals. General Grant didn't mind killing men—therefore the following elucidation:

He was a "zoöphile". A strongly accentuated zoöphily throws the emotional nature out of balance! . . . "In Grant's case it was probably a reflex of the attitude of Georgetown people toward him as a boy." Another taboo ("that of turning back when he had once started") which Grant himself classified as a 'superstition', is clarified by being called an "obsession with formidable dimensions".

Truly it was remarked by Schopenhauer that people would rather read the life of a genius than his works. There is no doubt some justification for this biographical curiosity. But we cannot pretend to have "explained" a man's work when we have only shown (and that in an apocryphal manner) the motivation of his behaviour. No more than we can explain the relativity theory on the basis of Einstein's retiringness. We find Zweig explaining the acuteness of Dostoevsky as a result of his epilepsy, some mystic union with God. Lavrin likewise: "What at first glance seems a psychopathic mental deficiency may in the end prove to be a super-normal manifestation of man's consciousness and a means to further growth and evolution." From the scientist's point of view this is utter nonsense. That the epileptic fit has for ages been regarded, by the ignorant, as a visitation of God is perfectly true, but the objective consideration of the clinical facts indicates that nothing mystic and transcendental takes place but that there is, on the contrary, most likely an obliteration of the entire psychic life. This is in line with the modern tendency to regard the genius as allied to the psychotic. The evidence for this view is usually the sage remark that extremes meet.

It is true that there are records of geniuses who have been interned in asylums, but that has not been the cause of their works. Dostoevsky's penetration and capacity for work was in spite of his epilepsy and not because of it, Burchell's remark notwithstanding. From the catalogue of the Museum of Art Moderne regarding the paintings of Klee: "They [his paintings] have been compared to the fantastic and often truly marvelous drawing of the insane, who live in a world of the mind far removed from circumstantial reality. . . . The child, the primitive man, the lunatic, the subconscious mind, all these artistic sources (as recently appreciated by civilized taste) offer valuable commentary upon Klee's method." Bosh! It is high time that literary and artistic

people stop making a fetish of abnormality. Let them realize that it is a defect in every way and brings one no nearer God or artistic perfection than the possession of an IQ of 45. Of course it must be admitted that the affliction may have some effect on the content of the novel. Thus Dostoievsky would probably not have considered epilepsy if he himself had not been an epileptic. Or Huysmans would not have written neurotic and strange tales if his urine, as Anatole France hinted, had been normal.

"We have then traced Poe's art to an abnormal condition of the nerves." This statement is incomprehensible. As psychology we have indicated before that it is highly doubtful. As literature it is no more illuminating than the remark previously quoted about Einstein. Such explanation is in line with a contemporary's explanation of Nietzsche's philosophy on the basis of his physique and misfortunes. Yet this sort of explanation is by no means uncommon. It is but an example of the psychological ambience of the day. Many a modern biographer and critic feels that he has explained a given piece of literature by showing, in a dubious manner, its motivation. Doubtless, one may be dramatic in explaining Heine's poems as a compensation for his lack of success with high-born ladies, or Mr. Downes may appear to be erudite, in criticising Arnold's Schoenberg's *Die Glueckliche Hand*, to say: "There are two important elements for artists and psychologists in the work performed last night. The first its technic, the second its psychological basis. . . . It appears as more than a casual coincidence that Glueckliche Hand (in the person of Schoenberg), although he now lives in Berlin, emanates from that same Vienna which is the home of Freud. We believe that the Freudian standpoint is necessary to explain Schoenberg's music. It is certainly music of suppression, of highly involved and egocentric impulse, and none the less poignant, even impressive, for that reason. . . . And the correlation of man and period might well be sought in the psycho-analytic examination of Schoenberg himself, his neuroticism, his pessimism, his exasperated passion which is without force or evocative power, his consciousness of oppression, his vain and extremely involved ways of attempting to make his music potent and articulate, while every day its complexes multiply and its potency declines" . But what literary value has all this and, in the latter instance, what musical value?

Josephson, in his illuminating biography of Zola, gives us the intellectual background which nourished Zola in his production of the Rougon-Macquart.

We believe in science. The future is there, that is the general view. In whatever direction I turn, I see nothing but scientists. Even Sainte Beuve has declared: Anatomists and physiologists, I find you everywhere! We have already spoken of the spread of positivism in this era under the influence of Lamarck, of Darwin, of Dr. Claude Bernard and of Hypolyte Taine.

It was at this time also, that the study of neurology was engaging great interest. Abandoning psychology they pounced upon the livid brain itself, with enthusiasm, exulting that science was about to 'expose the soul'!. . . We must go to the 'clinic of love', study rare and curious cases, hysterias, deviations from the normal, hypertrophy, insanity!

The parallel of Zola's day with our own is close. It is true that psychology has again regained its place. And that is fortunate. For psychological terms are so much easier for the *littérateur* to handle than neurological ones. Still the parallel is a curious one. The naturalists of that day thought they were creating sociological documents. It is evident that some of our novelists are treating their products with the same solemnity, for do they not feel that they are creating psychological monographs? Zola was a miserable scientist and an inverted romantic, as Josephson has convincingly shown. The motivation of his sociological writings, which were only externally influenced by the philosophy he had so consciously adopted, is shown to result from a search for novelty. The lesser men of his period wrote more in accord with his theoretical program and resultantly they made poorer novels. Similarly, we find Lawrence in his *Lady Chatterly's Lover* abandon his psychological jargon and write a love story that is extraordinary for its freshness and virility. The terms "unconscious", "subconscious", "frustrations", "repressions", "hysteria", "Oedipus Complex", "inferiority complex", and the rest of the wretched crew should be forever banished. They have lost all vitality for the intelligent reader. They are the hall-mark of the hack.

Theoretically their use arises from a confounding, only too commonly, of the functions of the scientist and literary man. What the function of the latter may be it would probably be difficult



to state concisely. But it certainly differs from that of the scientist as that of the painter of animal life differs from that of the zoölogist. Your animal painter shows you the beast in vivid detail, a given beast, one that you could name and live or hate. The scientist portrays any animal, in diagrammatic form. It is a scheme he gives you of the bear in general with the individual peculiarities omitted. It is incongruous for the novelist to speak of the erector-spinal reflex" reactions of his hero and it is just as incongruous for him to mention the "sub-conscious introvertive tendencies" of the unfortunate neurotic he has chosen to dissect. These terms have no particular significance, they are of general import as all scientific terminology must be. The novelists who invoke the second law of thermodynamics are no more ridiculous than these.

### III

What position then can literature take with regard to psychology? Must it abjure psychology completely? After all, literature for ages has been psychologising in an unobtrusive way: at least, in the sense of establishing motivation. We would be needlessly convincing were we to begin to cite the great masterpieces of the ages that have illuminated the workings of human beings. But they have done so in terms of literature itself. They have not babbled of complexes and urges. They have used their own medium. Some of our present novelists are creating hybrid products that in very short time will be disliked and condemned by both literary men and pseudo-scientists of uncertain lineage, whose parentage in science is confused.

This is no thesis, as we are afraid it may be considered, by the hasty, for "Humanism". It is no plea for the segregation of literature from life. The situation of some of our *littérateurs* is analogous to that of the psychologists. The latter have a sneaking feeling of inferiority towards the neuologist. They have envied the latter's collection of 'solid' scientific fact. Consequently you will find in psychological texts a few diagrams of an hypothetical brain functioning just to add a scientific tone. The existence of psychological terminology and of the truly scientific psychological attitude which it should betoken has no more place in literature

than a discussion of the theory of electro-magnetism. And that goes for the psychographers too.

In spite of all this to-do, one feels the essential impermanence of this "psychological" tendency in literature. And to convince ourselves of its transient character we have only to remember the novels of the second half of the nineteenth century, which fattened upon "the struggle for existence" and "the survival of the fittest". Witness Zola's *Doctor Pascal*, a novel in which the protagonist concerns himself almost wholly with the hereditary stigmata of a huge family. "Heredity", he writes, "instead of being resemblance was an effort toward resemblance thwarted by circumstances and environment." And "he had arrived at what he called the hypothesis of the abortion of cells". Who hears of these vaguely familiar terms now? Gone, gone are the snows of yesteryear, and go, too, must the frustrations and inferiorities, as soon as they have lost their novelty.

Since this age is predominantly psychological, our literature must itself be marked by it. Psychology will indicate for the literary man, new domains for exploitation, but always to be developed in the manner of literature, not in borrowed and ill-fitting clothes.

by A. K. Davis, Jr.

### INVOCATION

O Muse who gave this gift of song,  
Forgive me if I do it wrong  
In making with it holiday  
Against the world's more sober way.  
Grant me for this at least your ruth:  
With nonsense sing I yet some truth.  
Though I present no counter-creed,  
The world and I are not agreed.  
Yet, World, it is not you I mean,  
Rather the shut-eyed Philistine  
Who does not know, who cannot see,  
Yet lords it over you and me.  
Let's coax him to a wiser bent  
With this brief moment's merriment.  
Once more, O Muse, your pardon give  
And let what lines are worthy live.

by R. D. Darrell

## BEFORE A TRUNCATED SARCOPHAGUS

### CRITIQUE OF RECENT PHONOGRAPH RECORDS

Among obscure world cults, not the least curious is that whose devotees are known in France as "phonomanes", in England as "gramophiles", in America as "discophiles" or "phonophiles". An eccentric circle touching both center and periphery of the world of music, the collectors of gramophone discs—practitioners of the "art of phonography"—have established not only a vast library of recorded music, but a virtual sect with a press, a terminology, even a literature of its own. Its disciples are mostly quiet, respectable professional men, a native insurance agent in Bombay, an Indiana rabbi, a Bagdad shopkeeper, an Iceland trader, a Montana rancher. Its historians are a clerk in Shanghai, a salesman in Marion, Virginia, and a Parisian musicologist. A British novelist and a Danish-American detective founded its first journals. Its forerunning prophets were Roger Bacon, Albertus Magnus, and Rabelais. Perhaps the richest, most mature mind of the twentieth century has paid tribute in *Der Zauberberg* to the passionate sorcery of its rites.

To some a hobby and to others a substitute, phonography is to many an escape, and to a few, an education of the subtler sensibilities. Like Hans Castorp, there are those who sit in the night and silence before a truncated sarcophagus of music, sounding the deeps of feeling with shellac disc plummets, and like him finding soul-enchantment in tonal experiences more intimate, evocative, and profound than any possible in the scented, theatric atmosphere that stifles all music in public performance.

The search for manna by these musical solitaries was once a matter of tedious thumbing of foreign catalogues, sizeable bank drafts, and bickerings with the customs officials. Today it has been simplified by the enormous extension of the recorded repertory and the growth of alert and far-ranging importers, but it has been complicated by the very embarrassment of riches. The disc reviewer has already become a necessity; unlike his literary colleague, he is not yet swollen in pride and power to the point of becoming an evil. As one of the first of the American tribe, I

write not so much with authority as some experience, less evangelistically than critically. There are proper organs for encyclicals to the faithful. Here is place only for suggestion to the curious, those cut off by circumstances or temperament from concert meccas, mildly or sternly skeptical of mechanistic media, and yet for whom music is life blood, and finger gymnastics an unpleasant or unsurmountable barrier to music making. For them I remind only that the phonograph is no radio to cram tabloid entertainment down one's throat: that it has become a fair substitute for public hearing and may even be a preferable alternative. It is a mechanistic medium and even its mechanics are still far from perfection, but it is also a medium of selective, personal musical experience. And those qualities are its best proselyters.

Passing over the standing repertory of recorded music (for which refer to phonograph catalogues, encyclopedias, and journals), one may well note that the most ecstatically blurbed productions of recent months are not those most characteristically suited to phonograph reproduction and experience. Essentially concert transcriptions, often recorded at a public performance, they are showy, inflated works, creating mob tension and battenning upon it. Only to those who hanker for an echo of the thump of a big drum, who measure music in terms of decibels or emotional transports, can I recommend Scriabin's *Poem of Ecstasy* and *Promethus*.<sup>1</sup> Fiery, exalted, powerfully exciting on first hearing, their bogus mysticism and pseudo multiplicity are quickly dissolved by familiarity, revealing their innate neurotic stimulation, the barrenness of their harmonic architecture and the instability of its foundation on a single "mystic" chord. Even more Brobdingnagian in structure although considerably less grandiloquent in utterance is Schönberg's *Gurrelieder*,<sup>1</sup> product not of the mature, elliptic mind that produced *Pierrot Lunaire* but of the Wagnerian adolescence exhibited in *Verklärte Nacht*. With the modesty of twenty-six Schönberg felt his setting of Jacobsen's songs of Gurre should enlist not less than an orchestra of 125, a chorus of 400, five soloists, and a speaker. The Philadelphia orchestra as one of its grandstand plays gave the work its American première last April and shrewdly had it broadcast and recorded at the same time it was publicly performed. Schönberg, unlike

<sup>1</sup>Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra [Victor].



Scriabin, was victim of no obsession; his attack of elephantiasis passed quickly and even in the latter parts of the *Gurrelieder* the flabby muscles grow taut, luxuriance gives way to terseness, a maturity is foreshadowed. That is to be heard, as is the glorious contralto of Rose Bampton, one of the soloists, but bringing the complete set into one's music room is like kennelling a dinosaur in one's cellar.

A world removed are the limited editions of *lieder* and piano sonatas available to subscribers only from the British Wolf and Beethoven Societies<sup>2</sup>. Elenar Gerhardt's voice has faded, but her singing is still matchless, while Artur Schnabel—capitulating to recording for the first time—has no peer in the classical keyboard repertory. With his records, or as substitute if they are attainable, should go to the sonata in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2, played by Giesecking, and perhaps the most sensitive example of recorded pianism [Columbia]. On a lower but still notable level are the complete set of Chopin waltzes played by Robert Lortat [Columbia], Schumann's symphonic studies and Debussy's preludes by Alfred Cortot [Victor], and the Beethoven *Waldstein* sonata by Wilhelm Kempff [Brunswick].

Choral recordings include two major works in the repertory here recorded for the first time in adequate but not exceptional versions: Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*<sup>3</sup> and Haydn's *Seven Last Words*<sup>4</sup>. There is also a polite eagle's mew sponsored by the Washington Bi-Centennial Commission, *Song of Faith*<sup>5</sup> by John Alden Carpenter, whose sprightly *Perambulator*, *Skyscrapers*, and *Krazy Kat* have been ignored by disc manufacturers, but whose schoolboy essay, introducing *Yankee Doodle* and a few pious excerpts from Washington's writings, was immediately seized upon for enshrinement in shellac. Unfortunately, Carpenter seems to take it as seriously as Block took his *America* and joins in the performance to deliver the recitation.

One turns with relief from such buncombe to the honest, ageless intoxication of a group of Johann Strauss waltzes conducted with true Viennese *stimmung* by Julius Prüwer [Brunswick]. Gilbert and Sullivan's unflagging stream is equally refreshing.

<sup>2</sup>Sponsored by H. M. V. [British Victor]. Subscription may be entered through American importers.

<sup>3</sup>St. Bartholomew Choir [Victor].

<sup>4</sup>Tokio Academy of Music chorus and orchestra [Japanese Columbia].

<sup>5</sup>Chicago A Capella Choir and orchestra conducted by Nobel Cain [Victor].

One may have abridged versions of the *Mikado* and the *Pirates* by the Civic Light Opera Company or by paying a little more go to the fountainhead of the G. & S. tradition, the D'Oyly Carte Company, and have not only the above two, but also *Pinafore*, *Ruddigore*, and *Iolanthe*, superbly sung and recorded [all are Victor].

Those who find the magic of *Tristan* too often shattered by bulky operatic protagonists will relish the orchestral poem assembled from the beginning, second act, and close of the opera by Stokowski [Victor]. And those who believe that the lesser Richard attained greatness but once and that in *Till Eulenspiegel* will welcome the first recording of *Don Quixote* with its near, if not absolute, refutation of their belief. The gusto, the rib-lifting humor, the homely sentiment are not quite as pure here, but Sir Thomas Beecher comes closely to working the illusion that they are [Victor].

And finally there is Sibelius, whose fourth symphony—recorded for the first time—will be released by Victor this Fall. Not having heard the record themselves as I write, I cannot be sure to what extent Stokowski's latent demagogism may have distorted the firm lines of the work, his latent femininity softened them. But at least one can be sure of force and intensity and with such a voice the symphony can speak for itself. Those who associate Sibelius only with the depictive indiscretions of his youth will not find the reticence, the stripped muscularity of the symphonies—and especially this fourth—to their taste. To some, this is the "inconsequential ravings of a madman." Others find weak support on the crutches of dour Finnish landscapes and the bleak sorrows add bleaker merrymaking of Finnish peasantry. And such weaklings had better give this music a wide berth. It is only for strong stomachs and strong minds. There is no consolation or respite in it. It is as bitter as death, as lonely as life. Here is the perfect antithesis of concert music, the perfect material for solitary hearing and experience. The strength of this simplicity, the economy of the most potent force in twentieth century music is not to be casually known. But once known, stood up to, the vision of Ezekiel in the valley is re-enacted, the dry bones in the sarcophagus take on life. Ours becomes the stimulation; theirs the real.

NOTE: The exceptional recording activity of Stokowski and Victor during the last few months accounts for the unusual preponderance of their work reviewed above.

by *Carroll Lane Fenton*

## SCIENCE, RELIGION, AND ART

STARS, ATOMS, AND GOD. By Harris Elliott Kirk. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1932. Pp. xv, 100. \$1.00.

KAMONGO. By Homer W. Smith. New York: The Viking Press. 1932. Pp. 167. \$2.00.

SCIENCE AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE. By Herbert Dingle. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1932. Pp. 141. \$1.75.

The trend toward a philosophy of science is one of the most conspicuous products of modern physical theory. As hypothesis and formulæ push toward the frontiers of an inconceivably vast, yet apparently finite domain, factors and possibilities are encountered which demand revision of what once seemed first principles. A philosophy of nature no longer suffices; we must have a philosophy of science itself if we are to keep pace with current discovery.

In a surprising number of cases, this effort has not stopped with the interpretation of science, but has progressed into the field of religion. Millikan, Eddington, and Jeans have been leaders in this new conciliation, and their efforts have been welcomed by many leading divines. Of these Dr. Kirk is one: his book is a survey of astronomy and physics as they permit—or support—religious interpretation of matters once held the property of science. Curvature of space, quantum physics, the uncertainty principle and supergalaxies,—all these, to Dr. Kirk, “plainly indicate that the present scientific world is looking at the universe confederate and linked together by a Supreme and Directing Intelligence, in which all things consist.”

It would be preposterous for a paleontologist to criticize the physical and astronomical evidence with which Dr. Kirk supports his conclusions. Yet one may suggest the need for caution greater than he seems to employ. New concepts may have destroyed old ones—but are they safe guides to “bed-rock meanings”? There are rumors that Professor Einstein now doubts the curvature of space; more than one physicist questions Jeans’ conclusion that the universe *surely* is running down. And though no scientist can deny that if there is ultimate reality, “it must be something like

ourselves", he may not be willing to accept the conclusion that "All through the physical world runs that unknown content, which must surely be the stuff of our consciousness". In one breath Dr. Kirk stresses the limitation of knowledge; in another, he accepts present theory as truth, and because it does not negate an idea, accepts that idea as proved. This is not the method of science, and it ignores the history of knowledge. Unless this reviewer is much mistaken, many of the concepts on which Dr. Kirk places firm reliance will join the even greater number whose elimination has made possible his argument.

In any case, conclusions such as he puts forward must be reached by way of philosophy or religion, not by the slower road of science. Nor may the scientist, in his proper sphere, properly introduce methods of synthesis or learning which he can not apply in normal investigation. The charge hurled again and again at Haeckel—that he distorted science into philosophy, ignoring the proper line between them—may be made against Jeans, Eddington, and Millikan, and even against Dr. Kirk. There is a vast gap between hypothesis and belief, and both are apt to suffer if its presence is overlooked.

These restrictions furnish much of the basis of *Kamongo*, one of the year's most remarkable books. Written by a professor of physiology, it is announced as a literary effort and ranks as the one thoroughly modern statement of Huxleyian agnosticism. One may or may not agree with its conclusions, but of its beauty and timeliness there can be no question. And when a volume of 167 pages manages to be a thrilling account of travel, a contribution to natural history and a significant statement of biological philosophy, even those who disagree may rejoice. It is something to have a worthy opponent, and *Kamongo's* author is of the best.

Briefly, a biologist uses the declining lungfish as a text upon which to erect an argument for skeptical materialism which is criticized by a traveling companion, a liberal Anglican priest. The biologist may be wrong, but he argues with an earnest caution that is far more nearly convincing than was the fire of Huxley or Haeckel's bludgeon. The priest fares somewhat less well, yet at the least he must be respected and admired, while at most he stands as an example of that dignity which Dr. Kirk claims for firmly grounded religion, but which he somehow fails to portray. Neither priest nor biologist will satisfy the conservative critic who



holds that revealed religion need never compromise with science; but to such Dr. Smith's book is not addressed. He asks for his characters that fairness and tolerance which they grant each other, and the reader who meets this request will find his book to be one of rare value.

Dr. Dingle approaches problems "solved" by Jeans and Eddington in their own field of astrophysics, and in addition offers some cautiously wrought conclusions on the significance of science in the field of art. Defining science as "the recording, augmentation, and rational correlation of those elements of our experience which are actually or potentially common to all normal people", he distinguishes it both from religion and from art, whose experiences he finds to be individual. If this is true, science can not lead to religion, as Kirk maintains—nor can it be quite so nearly hostile as Professor Smith supposes. As for that freedom of the will which so often has been held prerequisite to artistic creation and moral responsibility: "Science has, and can have, nothing to say on the question. To Science, will is a quality of the mind, and mind is an abstraction from behaviour. It is a sort of parameter in terms of which observations can be expressed, and its only characteristics are those which enable it to express observations." One can no more ask whether the will is free than he can ask whether time is free: both are abstractions, and the question is without scientific meaning.

Here lies a very clear warning: science must not wander into the realms of religion, lest it become confused in metaphysics and drawn into acrid discussions whose basis lies in individual experience. Conversely, religion should be slow to draw support from science, whose methods are attuned to other materials. Must not the same be true of art, whose experiences also are individual and hence beyond the scope of science?

In a large measure, the answer is yes. Yet at least in the field of criticism, it is possible to adopt methods which compare with those used in physics or astronomy. Attempts to define such postulates as Beauty, Goodness, and Humor must fail, since (like Matthew Arnold's system of "touchstones") they seek to erect individual experiences into universal categories. Yet if we accept critical opinions which are in essential agreement, or deal with similar factors in art, as units approximating the common experiences which are the province of science, then *within their*

*limits* we may indulge in both augmentation and rational correlation. But only within limits: one may not correlate standards in dadaism with the artistic judgments of Mr. Royal Cortissoz—except along the most general lines. But since fixed standards of artistic merit do not conform to scientific procedure, there is small need for such correlation, or for the artificial judgments which those standards impose. The scientific critic may go his way without shame, even though he dislike Rafael and Milton.

Not all of this is new of course; on a very practical plane, Mr. C. J. Bulliet has illustrated Dingle's distinctions in his dual rôles of theatre and art critic. Yet this is the first time that the matter has been treated as a logical outgrowth of both the scientific method and modern mathematical physics. Perhaps it is prejudice which makes me prefer Dr. Dingle's conclusions to those of Eddington and Jeans and the more frankly emotional Dr. Kirk. Yet the extent to which modern critics (most of whom know little of science) apply the principles suggested in them testifies to the worth of Dingle's closing chapters. They go far beyond the limits of science: but they rest on generalities of individual experience too wide-spread to lack importance.

*by Maurice Halperin*

## POLITICS AND THE INTELLECTUAL

LE RAJEUNISSEMENT DE LA POLITIQUE. By Daniel-Rops, André Chamson, Ramon Fernandez and others. Paris, Editions R.-A. Corrêa, 1932.

No less than two years ago, France was probably the most self-satisfied nation in the western world. The United States were already struggling with an ever increasing economic depression, and there were nearsighted Frenchmen who hailed the American débâcle as the just triumph of Gallic idealism over Yankee materialism. But today, with exports falling and unemployment mounting, and with increasing unrest in industrial centers, France faces the devastating "crise économique" with as much bewilderment and anxiety as the United States. Rudely awakened

from a golden dream of security and prosperity, intelligent Frenchmen, just as their American brethren since 1929, are now fully aware of the incredible decrepitude of the parliamentary machine and realize that political democracy, at least in its present plutocratic form, is facing the severest test in its history.

It is the full realization of the universality of the crisis, of its political nature as well as of its economic and social implications, that is responsible for a symposium such as *Le Rajeunissement de la Politique*, whose very title suggests both the need and the hope for a political rejuvenation. Composed of fourteen essays by men of varying shades of opinion, it raises the problem—at all times perplexing but vital at the present moment—of the participation of the intellectual, and particularly of the man of letters, in the political life of the nation. Not for many a year has the intelligentsia of France expressed so much interest in the political, social and economic difficulties that confront the fatherland. Novelists, poets and philosophers, some with caution and others boldly, are forsaking the shelter of their ivory towers. Georges Duhamel, Jean-Richard Bloch, Drieu La Rochelle, André Maurois, Emmanuel Berl, among others—not to mention the renowned warriors of the extreme right and left who have long since merged letters with action—have been flirting with political and social theory; even the Olympian Valéry has approached the public forum with his *Regards sur le Monde Actuel*. *Le Rajeunissement de la Politique* is thus a timely book, significant in that it is a collective effort to define the rôle of the intellectual in a society that is in dire need of enlightenment and leadership, significant also in that its authors are young men, born close to the beginning of the century, many of whom have already distinguished themselves in the field of letters, and whose influence will increase with the years.

To go into a detailed discussion of the fourteen essays in this symposium, profitable as it might be, would take us beyond our allotted space; we must therefore limit ourselves to a brief summary of some of the more striking chapters. A fitting introduction is the sixty page essay by M. Daniel-Rops. It is a vigorous and sweeping criticism of both politics and the intellectual. The present political system is described as thoroughly bankrupt. Borrowing from the theories of Georges Sorel, M. Daniel-Rops points out that the two forces that insure a healthy government, a living "myth" or ideal and a strong opposition, are lacking. With power

in the hands of an oligarcy, the parliamentary regime is functioning on the basis of a fundamental falsehood, for it was designed to represent the citizens of the land. Small wonder then that most of the political parties lack genuine ideals and that politicians never approach the real problems of life. The very idea of "patrie" has lost its essential meaning: it is either worshipped as a convenient means for private enrichment or it is cursed as a bloodthirsty Moloch. And now, shifting the attack, M. Daniel-Rops shows that if politics has not kept faith with wisdom, no less have the intellectuals betrayed politics. At a time when their cooperation is most urgently needed, they prefer to stand aside, to dodge the vital problems of the day, even though it may mean life or death for the nation. Save for the dogmatist, both of the right and of the left, the intellectual is content to escape and to seek refuge within himself. M. Daniel-Rops is certain that in this respect the French bourgeoisie of today will be more harshly judged than the French nobility of the 18th century.

In somewhat the same vein, M. Ramon Fernandez takes up the criticism of the intellectual. He does not see enough difference between the intellectual and his less enlightened neighbor to warrant his escape into a world of his own. To M. Fernandez, the extremists themselves, whether Machiavellian (right) or Marxian (left), are victims of a romantic self-idealization; they have set themselves aside, beyond the pale of ordinary intercourse. Leaving M. Fernandez, we come to M. André Chamson who is generally sympathetic to M. Daniel-Rops' thesis. However, he emphasizes the fact that ideas are more powerful than deeds, and sees no hope for a rejuvenated political system unless there is a free play of ideas. One of the principal functions of the man of letters is to expose and criticize the hierarchy of existing values. Zola's work, for example, was exactly that, and as a novelist himself, M. Chamson finds in Zola one of the spiritual justifications of his occupation.

Jean Maxence, who continues the attack against the ivory tower with great gusto, differs from M. Chamson in that he insists upon the psychological and ethical necessity for direct action. The man of letters need not go into Parliament, but he must not fear the arena if he is to regain the esteem of the public. Quite the contrary opinion is voiced by M. André Wurmser whose ideas represent the 18th century philosophy of individualism as it has evolved



in France. It is a sort of intellectual anarchy which wages constant warfare against the gregarious instinct. Naturally, then, for M. Wurmser, to be a thinking man means to be a non-conformist, and all action, especially political action, is to be discredited. Also harking back to an ideology of pre-industrial days, M. Thierry Maulnier tackles the problem of order and revolution. Unlike M. Wurmser, M. Maulnier sees every reason for the intellectual to face the present crisis in the open, but for him the crisis is spiritual rather than economic. Thus he can see no hope in revolution for he considers communism to be only super-capitalism that will totally dehumanize whatever social values have thus far escaped the capitalistic scourge. Joining M. Wurmser, he attacks the ever increasing collectivism that an industrialized society has forced on the world. But if the revolution would only aggravate the spiritual ills from which we suffer, there is just as little to hope for from the apostles of "law and order", since their political action is based on a myth. Summing up the theoretical conflict between authoritarianism and liberalism, M. Thaulnier writes: "Neither [order nor liberty] can be erected as absolute values, except beyond the realm of all concrete experience . . . Abstract order overlooks the individual conscience as a fundamental fact and the final justification of society; abstract liberty overlooks society as a necessary condition and as the essential form for the development of the individual conscience."

Maurice Paz, who has definitely committed himself to socialism, and who would have the intellectual prepare society for the new ideas that must sooner or later triumph, answers M. Thaulnier's attack on the revolution by pointing out two of the fundamental contradictions of modern capitalism. In the first place, it supports the *nationalistic* state while contributing the principal impetus to an economic *internationalism*; in the second place, it pays tribute to an outmoded *individualism* while its industrial expansion engenders *collectivism*. Finally, M. Pierre d'Exideuill, returns again to the fundamental question of the intellectual and politics by demonstrating the possibility and the necessity of a political culture. It is for the intellectual to build up a political culture that will stand above all petty chicanery. For M. d'Exideuill, political culture implies constant criticism of all doctrines, for not all of the truth can ever be contained in one doctrine. Even should the party for which one has the most sympathy triumph, the critical

attitude is doubly important, since power dulls the critical faculties of the mind. Thus the rôle of the intellectual will be that of the eternal critic and seeker of truth; thus will the body politic be constantly nourished with wisdom.

Taken as a whole, the fundamental unity of *Le Rajeunissement de la Politique* lies in a common anxiety for society and a common feeling that political culture is no less important than literary or scientific culture. It is a preface to further and more elaborate discussion, but discussion based on an almost unanimous conviction—M. Wurmser is the only exception—that the intellectual *must* participate in the political life of the nation. It is in one respect an answer to Julien Benda, for the very tendency he labelled “treason” in his *Trahison des Clercs* is set up as the *sine qua non* of salvation. Moreover, it is the dual aspect of salvation that spurs on these young intellectuals to embrace the “treason” that M. Benda denounced, for not only is the existence of society in jeopardy, but also that of the intellectual. If the intellectual must act to save the state, and himself as a part of the state, he must also act to save himself *from* the state. It is for the sake of his precious individualism that the “clerc” must enter the arena. Our collective society is a *fait accompli*; we cannot turn back the wheels of time and progress by returning to a machineless age and the “spiritual sanity” that M. Thaulnier envisions. Let us then direct the faltering steps of our social colossus in the paths of truth, justice and learning, or else it will crush us. This seems to be the lesson of *Le Rajeunissement de la Politique*, a lesson over which the American as well as the French intelligentsia may well ponder.

*by Charles Frederick Harrold*

## KANT IN ENGLAND

IMMANUEL KANT IN ENGLAND: 1793-1838. By René Wellek. Princeton University Press, 1931. Pp. vii, 317.

In this account of the introduction of Kant's ideas into England during the first four decades of the nineteenth century, we are

struck by the fact that the Critical Philosophy, though inaccurately comprehended, made its fullest impact upon the poets and essayists. Except for Sir William Hamilton's inaugural address in 1836, there was little expression, among philosophers, of Kant's historical magnitude: as Dr. Wellek points out (p. 25), such early English Kantians as Willich and Nitsch were of little intrinsic importance in the intellectual life of the British Isles. For Dugal Stewart, "the academical monarch and outstanding representative of philosophy for his generation", the Kantian doctrine would merely "preserve to posterity a more perfect idea of the heads of its admirers than all the craniological researches of Gall and Spurzheim" (p. 49). Only in Coleridge and Carlyle did Kant's ideas take deep root. And even there they failed to receive a truly sympathetic comprehension. Coleridge, unable "to conceive in thinking what he felt he should confess and preach as a person", made a "philosophy out of this incapacity, a philosophy of the dualism of the head and the heart", and fell back upon the negative part of Kant, preaching, like Hamilton, a "learned ignorance" (pp. 134-35). For Carlyle, the *Critique of Pure Reason* meant little more than the demonstration of the subjective nature of time and space, and the superiority of Reason to Understanding. In a chapter devoted to "The Romantic Generation and Kant", we learn how little of Kant there really is in Wordsworth, how indirect and superficial was Hazlitt's understanding of Kant's doctrines, how characteristically fitful and capricious was De Quincey's interest. At a time when fundamental principles and metaphysical inquiries were discredited, and Utilitarianism was setting the key-note for philosophical thought, "all the [British] thinkers who had found a positive relation to Kant, somehow managed to put him back into the framework of English tradition and English orthodoxy" (p. 261). Not until a date beyond the scope of Dr. Wellek's study did Kant come into his own among English thinkers, in Green, Bradley, Bosanquet.

Turning from the negative side of the author's discussion, we encounter a surprising abundance of new material and an admirable reconsideration of old problems. The treatment of Coleridge's philosophical weaknesses, and of his transformation of Kantian doctrines into a theosophic reinterpretation of orthodoxy, is an achievement in penetration and brevity. Another noteworthy reconsideration of problems susceptible to further examination is

found in the discussion of Carlyle (pp. 183-202), with especial attention given to Carlyle's seldom-regarded *Wotton Reinfred*. New data appear in numerous sections of the book. Fresh light on Coleridge is provided in an Appendix presenting hitherto unpublished marginalia in the poet's copy of Kant's *Vermischte Schriften* (Halle, 1799). Henry Crabb Robinson is revealed as the author of no fewer than five articles on Kant (*Monthly Register*, August, 1802-May, 1803), and as one of the earliest English readers to penetrate to the heart of several of Kant's principles. The whole of Chapter V likewise opens up new regions in the Kantian influence. Two "enthusiasts", Henry James Richter and Thomas Wirgman, a painter and a jeweler respectively, though working outside of the main stream of literature and philosophy, devoted themselves so passionately to disseminating Kant's ideas that they at least provide an "interesting and diverting illustration of the background out of which grew the thought of the English romantic period" (p. 205). In addition, they prove that the idealist philosophy of the Romantic epoch was not exclusively the interest of a few exalted minds. Though Richter's exposition is blurred and inadequate, and while Wirgman applied Kant to orthodox solutions, they both bear witness to the extremely interesting and fruitful fields into Dr. Wellek's researches have led him.

The author has succeeded admirably in overcoming the difficulties of writing in a foreign language. Occasional errors in idiom are offset by the skill with which he handles a formidable mass of fact and interprets some very elusive and complicated relations between men and doctrines. Errors in proof, though not numerous, are unfortunately noticeable on certain pages. Among the growing number of studies in the relation between German ideas and English literature, the present work should rank high.



by Minnie Hite Moody

## IMPRESSIONS OF EXPRESSION

**EXPRESSION IN AMERICA.** By Ludwig Lewisohn. New York: Harper Brothers. Pp. 624. 1932.

To those who enjoy their literary vistas in panorama, *Expression in America* should prove a veritable treasure. For Mr. Lewisohn has faithfully and inclusively depicted his scene—if anything, too faithfully and too inclusively. His horizons begin, not with the dawn of our own national literary consciousness, but in the remoter shadows where wandered the itinerant bard. And they end where they should rightfully and loyally end, in generous prophecy of a future (if perhaps distant) American literature of a higher order.

Precisely such an analysis as this was to be expected from Mr. Lewisohn. His critical creed has undergone more or less regeneration: he is no longer the impressionist that he was. He has lived long enough and studied hard enough to have something to say. And he is independent enough as a thinker to apply psychology as an interpretative medium under such circumstances and in the cases of such of our creative artists as he deems unapproachable by other means. As a result, the reader may be jarred—perhaps jarred into sensibility.

From a physical standpoint the study quite naturally falls into twelve separate books which follow in strictly chronological succession, digressing only where emphasis demands digression, advancing or looking back only in explanation or expansion, pausing occasionally for a wider glance, or a peep in an entirely different direction, but never, as it were, for breath. Both thought and theory are distinctly integrative. One is as refreshed by the application of tried and proven principles of criticism as one is wearied by Mr. Lewisohn's incessant tirelessness. For if, indeed, Mr. Lewisohn is indebted to Sainte-Beuve and others of the moralistic tradition, for doctrinal fortitude, he is indebted elsewhere for such eyesight and patience and inquisitiveness of intellect as must have been implements toward the accomplishment of his task. For he has obviously spared neither himself nor the victims of his curiosity. His opinions are based on no mere smattering of ran-

dom knowledge but upon a sound and serious and workmanlike understanding of the writers themselves. One may disagree with him, but if so, one meets honest argument. And it was time that his book should be written. Our criticism is by turns bleak, smug, flat, and too consciously clever. We have thrown our influences, and our wits are dulled by the perennial repetition of outmoded dogmas. The time was ripe for us to be reminded of a number of things, and to begin a fresh forgetting of many others.

*Expression in America* is valuable, then, first as a record and second as a critical attainment. The intermingling of these elements has, of course, constituted the charm of the book. Written with that impeccable diction that a multilinguist occasionally achieves, the cultural experience of these United States is efficiently set forth. But question after question leaps upward in the accurate mind. It seems far-fetched to blame the Calvinists for everything. Yet surely something is behind the tragedy of our intellectual conformity, that adherence to tradition which has made our literature great but stopped it pitifully short of a larger greatness. *Is Calvinism the reason for it all?* Here is one line of thought in which Mr. Lewisohn appears prejudiced. Every conceivable opportunity finds him reiterating what is evidently a favorite premise.

But it is as well that the artificer is revealed in his true light and with vehemence. Herein lies a verity on which enough can never be said: education is at once its medicine and its poison. Mr. Lewisohn has no doubts whatever on the subject, and neither has the reader once Mr. Lewisohn has finished dismembering and damning his hapless, and in many instances long-buried, specimens. For it is as specimens that the whole company of American scribes from Captain John Smith to William Faulkner is dragged forth and dangled before a ruthless scrutiny. With this reservation: there lurks behind the caustic discernment of Mr. Lewisohn's critical and prophetic genius a sort of compassion for the author of anything, be it what it may. Loving literature as he does, he can never be entirely harsh with its sources; loving humanity as he must, he can never be entirely heartless toward his fellow-man who is his brother-in-literature, after all. This being the case, certain exponents of the polite tradition may still rest easily in their allotted dust. And only because of this, for here is a man

who hates the unoriginal, the complacent and the acquiescent with a meticulous and constant ardor.

Over several centuries and more than six hundred pages one goes on reflecting with Mr. Lewisohn. His confessedly Freudian method of analysis is interesting but somehow less necessary than he would lead one to believe. As to his evaluation of his writers, there are passages which actually rouse one to ire. The troubled yet fascinated reader seesaws between agreement and disagreement, finally deciding (as he should have sooner) that here at best and worst is but one man's opinion, even though that opinion be of such lofty critical persuasion as Mr. Lewisohn's. Nor is Mr. Lewisohn himself unaware of this, as he gives warning in his preface which concludes hopefully in the words and spirit of Sainte-Beuve, that his book will "advance the question and not leave things hereafter quite as they were before." Certainly this hope is realized in *Expression in America* whether or not his master would have been a trifle startled had he been privileged to read it. But it will be a long time before a critical work as comprehensive, as distinguished and as generally fair, shall be conceived and executed. It is a contribution of inestimable significance to the very literature it has taken as a text.

by Carroll Lane Fenton

## ANIMALS AND ACROBATS

THE CIRCUS FROM ROME TO RINGLING. By Earl Chapin May. Duffield and Green. \$3.00.

The circus is America's distinctive art-form. Born in Rome and revived in London, its heroic age came in the country of Lincoln, Grant and Jim Hill. Today it epitomizes our passion for size, our love for vicarious adventure, and an apparently glamorous nomadic existence among wild beasts and dark-skinned man. That the beasts are caged and the men merely tanned makes no difference to a humdrum humanity, whose own efforts to reach adventure have resulted in Chevrolets and speakeasies.

Mr. May, unhappily, neglects these implications. His circus is one of showmen and big tops, of management and trends in performing. He details personalities from Ricketts to the Ringlings; he traces the development of the tented show from a small affair drawn by the horses of farmers to the entrained "canvas city" of today or the even more modern motorized circus, whose stock, from trapeze to lions, is transported on lurching, brightly painted trucks. In the process, he erects some idols and destroys others: most notably, Phineas Taylor Barnum. If Mr. May's statements are true—and there seems no reason to doubt them—Barnum was a mercenary, incompetent showman, whose fame rests upon the achievements of Seth B. Howes, W. C. Coup, "Chilly Billy" Cole, and James A. Bailey. These men contributed ideas and organization; Barnum's part was to lend the prestige of his museum success and his achievements as publicist and concert manager. From this combination came the Greatest Show on Earth, with simultaneous performances in two or three rings and handsome profits even during depressions. It is significant of the popularity of the circus, that "Mr. John" Ringling's \$30,000,000 museum of art represents several times the replacement value of all his shows, even after he purchased the Mugivan combine.

Despite such detail the book is incomplete. On the side of the circus, it slights animals and animal men. I find no mention of Riccardo, Rolfe, or Mrs. Sparks: not a word of Harry Mooney. The influence of the Hagenbacks is omitted, and the great animal shows like those of Bostock and Al G. Barnes appear only incidentally. Though they may not be major phases of the circus, they deserve more space than Mr. Mays gives them, both as phases of public entertainment and as havens for remarkable personalities.

There remain, of course, questions of popular art; of commercial response to public desire. This is even more striking in the case of the circus than in the justly famous showboat, yet May's pages are much less convincing than the incidental ones of Edna Ferber. Animal men and acrobats may or may not be artists, but they are significant indices of our public preference. As such, they deserve attention no less than theatre magnates and diplomats, or the pioneers who spread our still potent frontier. That Mr. May fails to give them their due means that he is a circus man, not a philosopher, but it lessens the value of the book.



MARY'S NECK. By Booth Tarkington. Doubleday, Doran. 1932.

Mr. Tarkington has written readable books, but *Mary's Neck* is not one of them. Like the Athenian artisans' *Pyramus and Thisbe* it is "tedious dull mirth". The subject is a good one—the adventures of a middle western family in Mary's Neck, a New England summer resort, a milieu that should have provided rich comedy had the author allowed the light of the comic spirit to illuminate the scene. Unfortunately he has not done so, and your reviewer must confess that he relieved his boredom, toward the end, by discovering how many pages he could turn in five minutes.

No one was ever deceived as to the reality of Tarkington's Penrod and the callow youths of seventeen—they were creatures of paper, sketched with ink, but they were often amusing caricatures of youth. Mr. Tarkington has exhausted this theme as his Enid and Eddie Bullfinch plainly show, and he apparently has nothing to offer as a substitute. Unfortunately he has discovered modernistic art; what he hasn't discovered is that the extreme modernists and their arty followers have been satirized frequently and nearly always more amusingly than does the windy Mr. Massey, whose labored narrative forms the body of the story. The social climbing, the cliques, the gossip of a respectable seaside resort should have been funny, and indeed they are funnier than the long-drawn-out episodes of the prima donna and the lecturer on Indian basket-work and ceramics. If one must read Tarkington, it would be more satisfactory to go back to the earlier novels than to stagger through the flat sands of *Mary's Neck*. "Some books", wrote a student recently in an unconscious parody of Bacon, "are to be bitten, some chewed, and some digested." I rather fancy that *Mary's Neck* belongs to the first category.

—S. H. M.

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THE BALLAD OF TRADITION. By Gordon Hall Gerould. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press. 132. Pp. 311.

This new treatment of an ever-fascinating subject is based not only upon the work of the well-known scholars but upon the rich harvest of material gathered by collectors within the past generation. For it has been amazingly proved that ballad-making, in the sense of re-creation, has continued to be a living art in our own

land and down to our own times. Professor Gerould wisely approaches the thorny question of ballad characteristics, the times, the stories, the variation, the relations of British and Continental versions. He thus builds up a sound foundation for his own theory, that the qualities of the ballad type result from the development, as early as the twelfth century, of a traditional art in folk-song. Thus, while rejecting Gummere's theory of communal origin and descent from primitive poetry, and insisting on an individual author and a formalized art, he maintains the truth implicit in that theory: that the ballad as we know it is made by the constant re-shaping of generations of oral tradition. Professor Gerould has offered a safe middle ground on which the warring scholars may meet.

The most distinctive feature of this study is the chapter on American balladry, showing the power of oral tradition to preserve the old ballads amid changes of scene, mixture of stocks, and even the menace of popular education! The appendix, a group of ballads of American origin taken from the recent collections, testifies that "while songs like this remain alive, balladry is not yet dead."

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THE VERCELLI BOOK. By George Philip Krapp. Columbia University Press. 1932. \$3.50.

*The Vercelli Book*, volume II of the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, is now added to Volume I, *The Junius Manuscript*, which was published last year. Professor Krapp's undertaking is important for Anglo-Saxon scholars, particularly for those in America. After the corpus of poetry is published, we should have a new dictionary and a concordance.

In the Introduction, Professor Krapp includes tables of the accents in the Vercelli Book and in the Junius Manuscript. Scholars will look forward to publication of Professor Krapp's own theory of the values of accent marks in the manuscripts. That they indicated quality rather than quantity, seems a probable and lively idea, illuminating and illuminated by the difference in modern English between the so-called "long" and "short" vowels. The Anglo-Saxon orthographer, and Orm later, would hardly have been at pains to indicate quantitative differences which were ac-

cepted as a matter of course in Latin. Unfortunately the extant manuscripts of Anglo-Saxon date from a late and decadent period in the cultural tradition. The scribes have confused the sciences of stress marks, if it had been formulated.

The editing and the typography are most creditable to American scholarship and bookmaking. *The Meters of Boethius and the Psalms*, volume V, will be published during the coming winter, and later, volume III, *The Exeter Book*.

W. C. GREET

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A GUIDE TO THE BEST FICTION. By Ernest A. Baker and James Packman. London, George Routledge & Sons, 1932. 42 s. An entirely new edition, including translations from foreign languages.

There are reference books which serve our purposes well enough if they are available on the open shelves of the university or public library; and there are others—a few—which ought to go into one's own library also. The new edition of Baker's *Guide to the Best Fiction* belongs emphatically in the latter class. The editors have given a wise but very inclusive selection of all the works of prose fiction that have appeared in the English language from ancient times through the year 1930. A brief statement of the theme of the book, with frequently a comment on its value, the dates of the author, the date of publication, and in the case of translations the dates both of the original and of the preferred translation, enable one to know at once what he needs to know. The arrangement is alphabetical, by authors, and an index directs the student if the name of the author is forgotten, and supplies also a classification of the authors by nationality. No possible means of making a reference book useful has been omitted.

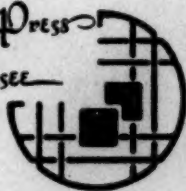
But the important thing is that, so far as the present reviewer has been able to determine by tapping the book at many different places, the judgment of the editors is nothing short of amazing. They have included only the books which there was reasonable justification for including, and they have said about each book just about what ought to be said.

H. D. Gray



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